0.4% growth puts RP on edge of recession

By Raissa M. Domingo

PHILIPPINE ECONOMIC GROWTH slowed to a 10-year low of 0.4 percent in the first quarter due to the global downturn, surprising analysts and prompting a senior government official to warn that the country is on the brink of recession.

Reacting to the lower-than-expected growth, monetary authorities trimmed key interest rates by a quarter percentage points to help jump-start the stalling economy. The central bank's overnight

0.4% GROWTH, A2

METRO / A23

Manila Mayor Lim lets Pandacan oil depot continue operations

NEWS / A4

Ex-DFA secretary Manuel Collantes dies; 91

NEWS / A2

RP swine flu cases rise to 10

WORLD / A26

North Korea warns truce ending Korean war is dead, is ready to attack

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS
Friday, May 29, 2009 ★ Vol. 24 / No. 173 www.inquirer.net

Gloria's frequent visits to Pampanga raise doubts

By Tonette Orejas
Inquirer Central Luzon

FLORIDABLANCA, PAMPANGA—HERE in her home province, President Macapagal-Arroyo has gone to places where no Philippine president has gone before.

This year alone, she's been here 14 times, and 12 of those visits were in the

GLORIA / A17

SO DARN HOT Shortly before the Senate hearing on the Kho-Halili sex video turned into a sizzler, ex-police officer and Pagsanjan Mayor Abner Afuang (standing, right) pours bottled water on Dr. Hayden Kho who keeps his cool.

Lakas-Kampi cracks show

Stalwarts no-show at merger rites

By TJ Burgonio

THE INK HAS HARDLY dried on the merger of Lakas-Kampi-CMD, described as a "powerhouse party," but cracks are already showing.

Former President Fidel V. Ramos was invited to speak at yesterday's formal ceremonies announcing the merger of Lakas CMD and the Kabalikat ng Malayang Pilipino (Kampi), but skipped it.

So did Camarines Sur Rep. Luis Villafuerte, former president of Kampi, and Lakas stalwart and presidential nephew Bayani Fernando of the Metro Manila Development Authority (MMDA).

Quezon City Mayor Feliciano Belmonte, Lakas executive vice president, was in China, and could not attend. Pangasinan Rep. Jose de Venecia, who was replaced as Lakas president last year, wasn't invited.

In a statement, Fernando said he boycotted the affair "for its lack of fairness and obvious preference of some party leaders for candidates who are not even Lakas or Kampi members and for ignoring party loyalists like me and other long-time card bearers."

"I have no intention of attending my own funeral," he said.

Fernando pointed out that several party leaders "could not contain their enthusiasm" for their choices, like Vice President Noli de Castro and Defense Secretary Gilbert Teodoro, "who are not even Lakas party members."

De Castro ran and won as an independent in 2004, while Teodoro was previously with the Nationalist People's Coalition (NPC) party of his uncle, tycoon Eduardo "Danding" Cojuangco.

"So much for fairness and dedication," Fernando said. He had earlier said he would bolt the party if not chosen.

In her keynote speech, President Macapagal-Arroyo told cheering party members at Manila Hotel that

LAKAS-KAMPI, A11

GIDO AND NOLI Seen as the most probable rivals as standard-bearer of the administration party, Vice President Noli de Castro and Defense Secretary Gilbert "Gibo" Teodoro, oddly enough do not belong to that party. Still, they are special guests at the merging rites of Lakas-Kampi-CMD on Thursday at the Manila Hotel. The two men smile broadly for a photo op.

Katrina, Hayden face off in Senate sex video probe

By Christine O. Avendaño

TALK OF SEX, DRUGS, LIES AND VIDEO clips, and an unexpected splash of water, made yesterday's Senate inquiry into the sex video scandal resemble more the foreign film with almost the same title.

The inquiry into the scandal involving cosmetic surgeon Hayden Kho Jr. and actress Katrina Halili became a virtual circus as the ex-lovers faced off and denied each other's statements in connection with his sexcapade video of their lovemaking.

A sideshow came up when a purportedly enraged policeman-turned-tabloid-writer poured a bottle of water on Kho's head at

KATRINA, A8

KATRINA OVERCOME At the hearing, Halili says, "broken na desisyon, sirendar pala."

Teodoro draws louder applause than De Castro

By Christian V. Esguerra and Michael Lim Ubac

THE MORE POPULAR ASPIRANT was not exactly the one applauded at the formal merger yesterday of the two ruling parties.

Judging by how he was welcomed, Defense Secretary Gilbert Teodoro all but upstaged Vice President Noli de Castro, the leading man in all surveys of possible presidential candidates. Teodoro received much louder applause, with some of his supporters howling, while De Castro got a relatively subdued reception from members of the new Lakas-Kampi-CMD party.

The two men were special guests at the merger ceremony held at Manila Hotel—an initial venue for party officials to scrutinize them.

The pet partylyne Teodoro said he was "overwhelmed" by the "warm welcome" he received from the new administration coalition, whose nomination he is seeking for the 2010 presidential election.

He pointed out that De Castro's

TEODORO, A10

Defensor to drop perjury rap against whistle-blower

By Tina G. Santos

JUDGE JORGE EMMANUEL LORREDO was so elated that Michael "Mike" Defensor won a re-show in a pretrial hearing yesterday that he asked the people in his courtroom to say a thanksgiving prayer.

Charging that he is unlikely to get a fair judgment, Defensor, former chief of staff of President Macapagal-Arroyo, expressed his intention to withdraw the perjury case he had filed against whistle-blower Rodolfo "Jun" Lozada Jr.

Defensor filed a perjury case against Lozada for claiming that Defensor forced him to lie that he was kidnapped upon his arrival at the airport from Hong Kong in

DEFENSOR, A8

GMA: Merger proves 2010 polls on

By TJ Burgonio and Christian V. Esguerra

THE LAUNCH OF THE ADMINISTration's new merged party should belie the contention of critics that it is here on something the May 2010 national elections, President Macapagal-Arroyo said yesterday.

Speaking at the ceremony formalizing the merger of the two ruling parties, Ms Arroyo rallied leaders of Lakas Kampi CMD to not only ensure the victory of its candidates in "credible" elections but to also foster "national harmony."

"Cynics and detractors love to paint grim scenarios about the outcome of the 2010 elections. Let this merger of Lakas and Kampi be tangible proof of the administration's resilience—nay, determination—to help ensure that the elections do push through," she told party leaders and members in a packed hall at Manila Hotel.

GMA, A10

LOZADA'S HABIT Navy Lt. Manuel Gadian (center) refuses at the Court of Appeals to submit her affidavit on the writ of amparo granted by the Supreme Court, ensured by a clutch of nuns like her fellow whistle-blower Jun Lozada, who's habitually protected by women of the cloth. He is not only surviving but prevailing.

Imelda: Lopez begged Meralco buyout

By Dianne L. Lucas

THIS IS THE IMELDA MARCOS version of the first divestment of the Lopez family in Manila Electric Co. (Meralco) following the declaration of martial law in 1972.

The Lopezes had practically begged President Ferdinand Marcos to buy them out of Meralco because of the desire of the family patriarch, Eugenio Lopez Sr., to contribute to his vision of a "new society."

More importantly, Lopez's son,

IMELDA, A6

Second FRONTPAGE
E-mail: pi_news@inquirer.com.ph Website: www.inquirer.net/main

WEATHER FORECAST

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	Isabela/Aurora	Partly Cloudy
Baguio	Mostly Cloudy	Ilocos	Partly Cloudy
Tuguegarao	Mostly Cloudy	Cebu	Partly Cloudy
Laoag	Mostly Cloudy	Tacloban	Partly Cloudy
North Luzon	Mostly Cloudy	Ilo-Ilo/Capiz	Partly Cloudy
Legazpi	Mostly Cloudy	Zamboanga	Partly Cloudy
Catarman	Partly Cloudy	Cagayan de Oro	Partly Cloudy
Tacloban	Partly Cloudy	Davao	Partly Cloudy

Manila Bulletin

6/49 Draw: 10 24 | EZ2*: 15 30 (*Do not match number)

SUERTRES*: 5 7 0 | SIX DIGIT*: 1 2 1 6 4 6

6/45 Draw: 6 5 3 | SUPERLOTTO 6/49: 5 5 19 28 42 49

2PM Draw: 7 7 7 | P188,155,137.60

Swine flu hits 4 more in RP

By Norman Bordadora

FOUR MORE INDIVIDUALS, INCLUDING A 47-year-old male with asthma and a one-year-old child, have tested positive for the influenza A (H1N1) virus, Health Secretary Francisco Duque III said yesterday.

The four new cases bring to 18 the number of people infected with the virus in the Philippines since the Department of Health started monitoring the spread of the virus two early May.

Duque said all four new cases were guests at the May 17 wedding that two Taiwanese citizens attended in Zambales before exhibiting symptoms and having found to be infected upon their return to Taiwan.

Aside from the 47-year-old and the one-year old, the other two cases include the child's 24-year-old mother and a 33-year-old foreigner.

"All are taking antiasthmatic and only have mild acute respiratory illness," Duque told a news conference.

Health Undersecretary Mario Villaverde said the 47-year-old and the 33-year-old are weighing while the 24-year-old and the one-year-old no longer have symptoms.

Villaverde said the 47-year-old exhibited symptoms on May 10 while the three others manifested their illness a day earlier.

"They were started on oseltamivir yesterday when they tested positive," Villaverde said.

Duque said that as in previous cases, some of the patients started to recover even before they were given antivirals, indicating that they may have already developed antibodies against the virus.

Duque said the first two H1N1 positive Filipinos—a 30-year-old girl and 50-year-old woman who both came separately from the United States—are no longer symptomatic and were to be discharged yesterday after repeat tests for the virus showed negative results.

"They will be sent home since they are no longer contagious," he said.

Duque said health officials are closely monitoring the case of the 47-year-old because of the complications posed by his asthma condition.

Closely monitored

"We're targeting this particular case because those with underlying medical conditions will be more affected as evidenced by the data that we have been receiving from Mexico," he said.

Other medical conditions that are thought to aggravate the effects of H1N1 are diabetes, chronic obstructive pulmonary disorder, hypertension and pregnancy. Infants are also at increased risk.

"[Asthma] is a chronic allergic condition affecting the lungs. So it can be scary. You don't want to have an asthmatic attack and the influenza happening together. We want to make sure the asthma is controlled," Duque said.

The case of the 33-year-old foreigner also bears watching, he said.

"We're investigating how he has been in the country because if he came from a country that reported an earlier case of H1N1, he could be the point of the beginning," the health secretary said.

Duque said contact tracing of the other guests at the Zambales wedding area still going on despite the 10-day monitoring period having lapsed on May 27.

"Not everyone is cooperative.... There's difficulty to complete all of them," Duque said.

But he discounted imposing a mandatory quarantine, saying those people will not be symptomatic forever. He said health workers would try to convince them to go through the process.

There were reportedly 50 guests at the wedding.

People who came into close contact with the cases that are now fully recovered appear to be negative of the H1N1 virus, Duque said.

"Of the 19 household contacts of the first case, only one manifested symptoms of influenza. Specimen taken from this person turned out to be negative for the virus," Duque said.

"All contacts of the second case continue to be asymptomatic and are observing home quarantine which ends tomorrow," he added.

As for the H1N1-positive individual who arrived in Japan from the Philippines on May 22, Duque said the person came from "a Philippine locality that had no reported confirmed H1N1 case or cases under observation."

In transit

Duque indicated that he might have contracted the virus while in transit before he reached his destination in Japan.

"The DOH is currently coordinating with Japanese health authorities. We will update you on our investigation," Duque said.

Even with the increased number of confirmed H1N1 cases, there still is no sustained community transmission in the country and no reason to delay the opening of classes on June 1, he said.

But he advised students returning from overseas holidays to observe self-quarantine for 10 days before going to school.

Meanwhile, Dr. Rio Magpantay, DOH regional director in Central Luzon, allayed residents' fears over the H1N1 cases traced to the Zambales wedding.

Magpantay said there was no cause for panic since the new cases found in the region showed only mild symptoms.

"There is nothing to worry about for now because all the cases, whether under observation or positive, are being managed and treated in Metro Manila facilities. There are no community-level cases," he said.

He said other guests at the Zambales wedding were having travel and encouraged it to report to the DOH.

Zambales Gov. Amor Deloso asked residents to stay calm.

"The DOH informed me that there is one Zambales resident who is under observation but that person is not in the province," he said.

Deloso said the Zambales Public Health Office (PHO) and the Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority have also imposed the strict rules the wedding host was held. Rosette Lopez, Inquirer Central Luzon, and Dodjie Galang, Inquirer Northern Luzon

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Virgin coco oil, vitamin C offer no flu immunity—DOH

STOCKING UP ON VIRGIN COconut oil (VCO) to prevent swine flu? Forget it.

While health products such as VCO and vitamin C have some benefits, the Department of Health (DOH) has warned the public against some claiming to provide immunity from the influenza A(H1N1) virus.

The DOH said it has already alerted the Bureau of Food and Drugs on companies that are exploiting the swine flu scare by misleading the public with false claims and advertising.

"There's this vitamin C product that claims it provides immunity to the virus. Having immunity is different from increasing resistance. There are also claims about virgin coconut oil, that it can prevent the virus. This is misrepresentation," said Baby Bautista, director of the DOH's health emergency management services, in a health forum in Makati City yesterday.

She said that although the DOH recommended taking vitamin C to help fight off infections, it did not mean that people could be shielded from a contagious virus.

"I hope they won't exploit the things we mentioned since we said eight-hours sleep and vitamin C could increase resistance," said Bautista.

Diane Aragon, president of the Pharmaceutical and Healthcare Association of the Philippines (PHAP), responding to Bautista's statements at the forum, assured that its 52 HIV/AIDS and multinational members companies would not spread misinformation on their products.

Making false or unsubstantiated claims is very irresponsible, Aragon agreed.

He also said PHAP members companies would not take advantage of the virus scare by hiking prices of health products.

The Philippines now has 30 confirmed cases of influenza A(H1N1), a new flu strain that has infected thousands worldwide.

The health department has stressed the importance of preventive measures like hand-washing and social distancing but reminding it also cautioned the public on "irrational use of antivirals, antibiotics and vaccines." Alfonso W. Lapus

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PARTY LI. Nancy Kadan is greeted by fellow rebels Marvin Rodolfo Lucaia who attended yesterday's hearing

AFP whistle-blower seeks court protection

By Norman Bordadora

THE DAY'S OFFICER WHO WENT into hiding after accusing several top military officers of cashing billions of peso meant for the Philippine side in joint military exercises with United States forces in 2007 obtained an Ex Court of Appeals restraining in a bid to win protection under a writ of amparo.

Lieut. Nancy Kadan fooled Intl and Gmtl in a printed white blouse and khaki slacks as she entered the courthouse accompanied by around 20 lawyers and other members of the Association of Major Religious Superiors of the Philippines (AMRSP).

But emerging from the hearing later, her manner had changed. Gaddan sounded strong and boyish against the military's struggling that she said she would flood "at the proper time and at the proper forum."

"For fear of my life, for the noble Filipino soldier and for two growing up children. I have to take a stand for the truth," she told reporters as the nurse led her to a waiting vehicle on the Court of Appeals grounds.

Gaddan's sister, Shellen Dionisio, had filed a petition for a writ of amparo after the wave officers organized from the Intl safety following revelations she made in the media on the alleged misuse of over P40 million intended for the Filipino troops' participation in the Balikatan joint military exercises with American forces more than a year ago.

The Office of the Solicitor General representing the respondent military officers asked that the amparo petition be dismissed and Gaddan's bid for a temporary protection order be denied.

"Fear can never be a basis for a writ of amparo. There is no execution for the petitioner of any acts or omissions. [that would constitute threats against Gaddan]," Assistant Solicitor General Marjorie Cabreros-Tung told the court.

One of Dionisio's lawyers, Ricky Sioson, countered that the Supreme Court had already recognized in the case of the Manalo brothers that "freedom from fear" was one of the rights the writ of amparo sought to protect.

Roque said Gaddan was inconsistent the past several days and that was the reason he would not prepare her affidavit detailing the threats.

"That's why we want Lieutenant Gaddan to detail her specific allegations," he said.

The appellate court's Ninth Division, which is hearing the petition, gave Gaddan 7 2 hours to submit an affidavit on her allegations of threats before the presiding justice for remote people in the military.

The court gave the respondent military officers the same amount of time to reply. The next hearing was set for June 8.

In other rulings, Court of Appeals (CA) associate justices Rodolfo Lincoln Jr. came to the hearing to show support for Gaddan after submitting his own hearing on perjury charges filed against him by former presidential chief of staff Eduardo Ermita in the Manila Regional Trial Court.

One of the officers Gaddan accused of misusing over P40 million of the P46 million training fund—retired Gen. Eugenio Cedo—attended the hearing to dad Partners Balikatan Committee and Philippine-based military officer Lt. Col. Antonio Bautista, another respondent.

Cabreros-Tung told the court the other respondents—Armed Forces of the Philippines Chief of Staff Gen. Victor Ibrado and Navy flag officer in command Adm. Ferdinand Golez—could not come because of prior official engagements.

2 of 16 RP sailors missing after rescue

TWO OF THE 16 FILIPINO CREW members who were rescued after their ship was hijacked in the Niger Delta last May 15, are missing, according to Vice President Noli de Castro.

De Castro, who is also presidential adviser on overseas Filipino workers, said Nigerian authorities are still searching for Jess Adhin Cantal and Cirilo Dogoy, who are unaccounted for following the successful rescue of three group of Filipino sailors from the militants who were holding them last May 16.

The sailors were captured and held hostage by militants who attacked two ships in Nigeria's Delta state last May 15, including their vessel, the Spirit, which was mainly owned by Filipinos.

The militants launched the attacks after warning the oil companies operating in the area to withdraw their staff.

De Castro said there was information about the condition of the missing sailors.

"We cannot make any speculation, no, we can only hope that they are safe and alive," De Castro said.

He said the Philippine embassy in Abuja was coordinating with the Nigerian foreign ministry and federal security officials. The embassy has also contacted the employer of the two seamen, Orion Marine to help in the search.

Cynthia D. Balana

OFW remittances boost hometown development

By Doris C. Dumlao

WHO SAID REMITTANCES from overseas Filipino workers would plunge drastically due to the global financial crisis?

Today, more and more OFWs, aside from regularly sending money back home to their families, tend to band together to raise funds to help develop their hometowns.

The agricultural town of Pozorrubio in Pangasinan, for instance, was cited in a recent study commissioned by leading global money transfer company Western Union as an example of a new phenomenon called "social home remittance."

Because of the huge development potential of such inflows, especially in the Philippines which is one of the world's largest recipients of remittances, Western Union said it planned to allocate funds in the country's project aimed at merging up collective remittances.

"Migrant worker remittances are mainly family to family giving for basic necessities. But if remittances are pooled and invested in creating economic opportunities for the whole community, the impact would be greater," said Western Union vice president Angela Seng, who was in Manila yesterday to host a one-day conference on collective remittance.

Ahead of the event, Western Union commissioned the Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) to conduct a study on communal or collective remittances in different parts of the world, their impact, and what could be done to make them more effective.

Pozorrubio, which has about 18 percent of its population working overseas, was cited in the study for having a local government that was able to encourage its overseas residents to make collective remittances to support local public works projects.

Bright lights

Since 1998, town officials have been visiting Pozorrubians in California, Chicago, Hawaii, New York, Washington and Hong Kong to encourage them to form chapters into coalitions or groups, elect officers, and identify projects and programs in their hometown that they could support monetarily.

"For example, Pozorrubio had no street lights, but after the mayor encouraged the migrant workers' families to put up lampposts in front of their homes, the whole town lit up," the EIU study said.

As the Pozorrubian migrants became better organized, the study said, the local government also began encouraging them to bond their donations directly to the beneficiaries, and invited them to return home to see for themselves the impact their remittances were having.

"Return migration was the theme of the 2002 town fiesta," the study said.

It said Pozorrubian migrant communities were able to harness the remittances of a park and library, and refurbish a high school's English learning center.

The community hospital received an electrocardiograph, computer, stethoscopes, toilet, septic tank, window screens, electric fans, beddings and medicines.

On top of these, the hospital is visited annually by locally born doctors who perform medical missions.

Multiplier effect

"The multiplier effect of these remittances has been enormous. By 2003, this rural town of 56,000 had fourteen cable, or rental services for visiting migrants, video rental shops, and a rural bank with over $2 million in deposits and only a few borrowers," the study said.

It also built 12 public and private irrigation facilities, 50 manufacturing establishments, six big private housing subdivisions and 33 day-care centers.

Different strokes

"This level of development is almost unseen even in rural Philippines, even in the larger municipalities. Moreover, the town's tax collections is one of the highest in the region, with most of the revenue coming from the busy public market," the study said.

The EIU said other LGUs had taken different approaches to encourage their respective populations to invest in local enterprises.

"The most visible example is the province of Bohol which set up an investment center and created a local investment code to assist investors in identifying, organizing and matching their resources with local partners," it said.

The Island Garden City of Samal, near Davao City, proved to be similar with regard to developing local tourism, it noted.

Another area where migrants make collective remittances is charity.

Cited as an example was the Filipino community in South Puget Sound in Washington state which raised more than $200,000 that is remitted to a foundation in Bulig City in Isabela del Sur to finance rehabilitation and livelihood projects.

Manuel Collantes is dead; 91

FORMER FOREIGN SECRETARY Manuel C. Collantes, husband of the late Isabelo Gonzalo "Chito" Madrigal, died early yesterday morning at the age of 91.

Doctors attributed the cause of his death to cardiopulmonary arrest.

A native of Tanauan, Batangas, Collantes graduated with a law degree from the Far Eastern University in 1940, passing the bar the same year. He worked briefly as an assistant attorney at the Office of Secretary of Justice and also taught International Law and Diplomacy and Parliamentary Practice at his alma mater.

Collantes served in various capacities in the foreign service, from Legal Assistant Secretary and Aide-de-Camp to the Secretary of Foreign Affairs to Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs before he was appointed Acting Minister for Foreign Affairs in 1984 under the Marcos government.

In 1981, he ran...and won... as assemblyman for Batangas province.

Until the time of his death, he was a director of United Pulp and Paper Company Inc.

In the 1970s, Collantes married Madrigal, whom he met in Washington DC where he was assistant secretary and counsel of the Philippine Embassy in 1949.

At the Senate yesterday, where she presided over a three-hour forum, she inquiry into a sex video scandal involving Dr Hayden Kho and actress Katrina Halili, Sen. Jamby Madrigal told reporters she was saddened by the death not only of her uncle, but even the demise of a 47-year-old cousin, Ms. Isabel Madrigal Sinayre, as well.

"This is quite a sad day for us, because they died and I'm here and I haven't seen their bodies yet," said the niece of the late bolero.

The senator admitted that she had not seen her uncle for some time because of a quarrel with other members of the Madrigal clan regarding the fortunes left behind by her aunt.

Senator Madrigal has filed a suit against Collantes and other heirs over the multi-billion peso estate of her late aunt. She claimed the will that left nothing for her was forged.

"Hindi ako pinapayagang dumalaw. Napakahapdi," (I was not allowed to visit. It was cruel), she said, adding that she heard her relatives had posted policemen and security personnel in the (Chito) Madrigal house.

"Hindi ko alam kung bakit naglagay sila ng pulis sa bahay na hindi kanila," Eckert understood why they need police to a house that does not belong to them) Madrigalsand if let others where she said she had used over the ownership of the house.

She was told, however, that she was welcome to attend her uncle's wake.

Collantes' body lies in state at the family residence on 77 Cambridge Circle, North Forbes Park in Makati City. A funeral Mass will be celebrated at 10 a.m. on Sunday at the Madrigal Mausoleum in Alabang, Muntinlupa City. *Christine D. Avendaño and Cyril Bonabcan, Inquirer Research*

Wires burn in demo of counting machines

Lawmakers no-show at Comelec

By Marlon Ramos

TERSON HOMOBARET GUIPED the Commission on Elections office in Intramuros yesterday after smoke came out of one of the election machines that the poll body's procurement committee was testing.

Comelec security personnel quickly doused out the machine belonging to Smartmatic Intramuros and Total Information Management Corp., the only bidder that qualified for the testing, which is part of the bidding process for the P11.3 billion poll automation project.

The poll body's operational link and security committee was conducting the test to find out if the election machines of the Smartmatic-TIM consortium could run on battery power.

"Some of the people inside the [computerized] room, they saw white smoke coming out of the machine," said Comelec spokesman Jack Saguisag, apparently referring to the lack of an electricity code with the media.

Smoke clears

A Smartmatic-TIM representative had to "restrain" a technician who approached the machine, fetching a fire extinguisher, said the official.

The smoke eventually dissipated after a representative from the consortium discovered the electric wire connecting the printed count optical scan (PCOS) machine to a battery.

Ferdinand Rodriguez, chair of bids committee, temporarily suspended the demonstration of the election machines.

Heider Garcia of Smartmatic-TIM explained that the wire connecting the election machine to the battery suddenly burned, then producing the smoke.

"The cable that was used to connect the battery to the PCOS was much thinner. We packed the wrong wire. It's for a much smaller battery," Garcia explained.

Big battery, thin cable

"There was overheating from a short circuit. Basically it was a big battery connected to a thin cable for power," he said.

The PCOS machine rejected when it was connected to an electrical outlet, Garcia said.

"The PCOS apparently shut down when it detected a short circuit to protect itself," he added.

"The machine will guard itself from the tampering once its features are tampered, in this case the power source," said Smartmatic.

Sidney Galpo, the Comelec electronic equipment Garcia's statement.

"The wires that were used were thin. The installation of the wire was not best-common," Galpo said.

Rubianes appeared satisfied with Garcia's explanations, saying the "system showed demonstration" was "very helpful."

Rubianes gave Smartmatic-TIM another chance to run the PCOS on Friday.

With most senators preoccupied with the media-packed Senate inquiry into the spread of sex videos, members of the joint congressional oversight on automated elections did not show up at the demo yesterday.

About lawmakers

From the most avid "pro-automation" to avowed the Comelec postmortem evidence the Smartmatic-TIM demonstration of the voting and counting machines.

One of those invited was Sen. Jinggoy Estrada, who led yesterday's hearing in the Senate investigation of the sex video of celebrity doctor Hayden Kho and movie star Katrina Halili.

Also absent were the senators known to be running for the presidency—Loren Legarda, Francis Escudero, Manuel Roxas and Richard Gordon.

Representatives Ferdinand Martin Romualdez, Abdullah Dimaporo, Kilusang Bagong Lipunan Rep. Teddy Boy Locsin, Bayan Muna Rep. Satur Ocampo and Akbayan Rep. Risa Hontiveros also failed to attend the demonstration.

Only Bayan and representatives to attend the demo, said Rubianes.

Instead of getting upset, however, Rubianes saw the lawmakers' non-appearance as a vote of confidence.

"I think their absence indicates that they fully trust the Comelec and that they fully trust the tests that we are doing," he said in response.

Rubianes said Romualdez, if he had come, would have seen that his doubts about full computerization of the elections were unfounded.

Correction

IN THE MAY 27 ISSUE, the front-page story—"Senate sets full-blown inquiry of Villar"—contained the erroneous subhead, "Revilla's complaint." The subhead should have read, "Bernadita's complaint," in reference to the ethics complaint that Bernadita Catanduanes Shop, Gilbert Remulla had filed against her husband Jinggoy Estrada.

The Daily Gospel

Friday, May 29, 2009
7th Week of Easter

Lectionary: Acts 25: 13b–21
Gospel: Jn 21: 15–19

Commentary

Today, Christ is calling us to the same vocation He gave to Peter. Until we, family, feed my sheep!" He's calling us to help Him in the work of His people's lives. Christ uses many out of our way lately to help a homeless person, send him to a food pantry, donate clothing to a thrift shop or clothing bank, or buy a hungry person a meal? Do we encourage our elected officials to find ways to help as much as, with love and compassion, as we would Christ Himself?

With so many realize that we are not alone! Unique all are called to share the love and concern, which so many hungry people need. Besides the physical hunger people face there is the spiritual hunger constantly around him. We have all been called to share the love God has called him/her to share that same gift (self-service, love, and forgiveness, love one another, as He taught him/her to love us first.

Lord, Christ is calling upon us to share the love, grace, mercy and forgiveness with everyone, as they might know of you or Him.

Amen.

Comments/Correspondence: Fr. Allan Lee, CP (Hope Ministry Center Co., 19 Sto. Rosario St., Quezon City, 1100 Metro Manila, Philippines; Tel. 372-7471; Fax No. 372-7472; E-mail: hope@hope.org.ph; Website: http://www.hope.org.ph)

0.4% growth puts RP on edge of recession

Francis Garcia

borrowing rate was cut to 4.25 percent, a fresh 17-year low, and its lending rate to 6.25 percent. [for story in Business, Page B11]

Economic growth from January to March screeched to 0.4 percent from 2.9 percent in the last quarter of 2008, according to figures released by the National Statistical Coordination Board (NSCB).

It was the weakest expansion of the gross domestic product since the last quarter of 1998 when the GDP—the sources of goods and services produced in the country during a particular period—plunged 2.4 percent amid the Asian financial crisis.

"A big challenge to the economic managers is the fact that the Philippine economy is now narrowing into recession," NSCB Secretary General Romulo Virola said at a news conference.

But Ferdinand Sison, Socioeconomic Planning Secretary Ralph Recto said he did not expect a recession—defined as two straight quarterly contractions of the GDP.

While he anticipated the economy "to remain afloat in 2009," Recto admitted he was "less confident" the lower end of the government's growth target range—which was already been revised downward—would be achieved.

Sison, who earlier predicted the economy to grow by 1.9 percent in the first quarter, acknowledged yesterday the government may need to readjust its revised growth target of 3.1-4.1 percent for the entire year.

The GDP figures "came as a big surprise to everyone," said analyst Jun Lifureyo of Accord Capital Equities Inc., adding that he had expected a first-quarter growth of 1.8-2.0 percent.

'Historic declines'

Sison said construction was the main growth driver for the first three months as developers rushed to meet year-end deadline for housing, boosted by a decline in the price of building materials.

Virola, however, said the overall economic slowdown was caused by "historic declines" in manufacturing and trade.

From a silver of growth in the fourth quarter of last year, industry turned to a contraction of 6.6 percent in the first quarter of this year, with most manufacturing plunging 7.7 percent.

Exports sank 18.2 percent, while imports declined 19.2 percent in the same period.

Growth in the farm sector eased to 2.1 percent in the first quarter from 2.9 percent the previous quarter. Agriculture accounts for less than 20 percent of the economy but employs almost a third of the labor force.

The services sector showed flat growth.

Leading indicators

Virola said leading indicators for the May-June period also appeared worrisome.

The indicators include the consumer price index, electricity consumption, cash-age cars, hotel occupancy rate, money supply, number of new business incorporations, stock price index, terms of trade index, coal imports, broker services and wholesale price index.

"The leading economic indicators have dropped four quarters in a row and breached into negative territory at -0.105 percent in the second quarter of 2009," Virola said.

"This confirms the all-too real threat of a recession ... If this trend continues we may slip into recession," he warned.

For Recto, however, the most pressing challenge is a potential drop in cash transfers from the country's 9 million overseas Filipino workers (OFWs). Their remittances, which account for about 10 percent to the economy still managed to grow 2.7 percent in the three months of the year.

NSCB

Consumption down

Jong Teng Wan, regional economist at CIMB in Singapore, said weak personal consumption—which fell 3.1 percent in the first quarter after growing 1.5 percent in the previous quarter—would weigh on the Philippine economy as OFW remittances were expected to be hit hard by the worst global downturn in decades.

"With as many Filipinos working abroad, there's certainly a risk that remittances will slow down and therefore the impact of the global recession will feed through to private consumption in the subsequent quarters," he said.

Remittances hit a record $1.47 billion in March, but officials said the global crisis will mean much of that money was being saved rather than spent.

Virola suggested that the government spend more to stimulate economic growth.

Government consumption rose 2.6 percent in the first quarter from a year earlier, picking up modestly from 2.5 percent in the fourth quarter, but public construction slumped 4.4 percent.

"The pump priming that had been planned in response to the global crisis obviously has not taken place," Virola said.

Government spent P355 billion in the first quarter, below the target of P502.4 billion. The unspent amount is April, when government pending bill is P108.7 billion from P126.4 billion in March.

More revisions

The government also announced it was revising down award economic growth data for the past three years.

The economy grew 5.3 percent in 2008, not 5.4 percent as previously estimated, according to Virola.

GDP growth in 2007 was 6.6percent, 0.7 percent lower than the 7.2 percent while 2006 expansion was slashed to 5.8 percent from 6.6 percent.

The fourth-quarter growth figure for 2008 of 2.9 percent was also revised down from 4.3 percent. *With reports from AFP, Reuters and AP*

Imelda: Lopez begged Meralco buyout

Francis Garcia

Fregenio Jr. or "Geny," jailed in Fort Bonifacio for an alleged plot to assassinate the dictator, had become such an enemy that Marcos "allowed" him to flee—a revelation that rests on its head the popular story of the daring escape by Geny and a young Sergio Osmeña III from the military's maximum security prison.

To correct misimpression

The former first lady spoke to the heiress to "correct the misimpression" in its series of articles earlier this week—"Meralco: Titans in the gas"—that her late husband had coerced the Lopezes into handing over control of the power distribution firm in the government.

According to Osmeña, Lopez wrote her husband on his three-day visit over an eight-month period in 1973, offering to sell the family's stake in Meralco to the government.

"Now that the government under your leadership is fully committed to this program [of 'democratizing' property ownership in the country], I believe the time is ripe to find ways and means of placing the ownership of Meralco in the hands of the consumers and the general public," according to a Lopez letter dated Feb. 19, 1973.

Following letters

The day after, Handling (former Vice President Fernando Lopez) and Osmeña would like to offer the sale of our holdings to a cooperative composed of Meralco employees, consumers and the general public that could be organized with the assistance of the government," the letter added.

Similar followup letters from Lopez in March and September of that year reiterated the offer, blaming of financial difficulties besetting the firm.

"In between [the letters being sent], I was in the US, and Eugenio Lopez Sr.—'Big'—would follow to the Palaloof Tower and wait for me there for hours to insist that the government take over this," Osmeña said.

'He was such a poet'

She explained that what convinced the President to take control of Meralco was the looming termination of guilty rights with the United States in 1974 that would allow Filipinos to gain majority ownership of US firms. Meralco was branded as a US utility.

Asked whether the offer could have been made under duress since Ninoy Lopez was at the time incarcerated, Marcos' widow said: "That's what they say. But how can they beg me these times?"

She said Geny was imprisoned "because they were caught, and he was pointed out as a conspirator [by his detention who was going to kill Marcos."

"So Geny long (truth is), he was such a poet, an irritant, we deliberately made him their (like) escape," Imelda said. "Pero wala nang ngangaw-ngaw dito (here will be no more problems)."

'Enkapo'

The escape of Geny and Osmeña in 1977 to exile abroad became a subject of a local 1995 movie, "Enkapo."

Imelda also confirmed her husband's program to reduce power rates, including the, eg, a fee of 1929 a launch for 78 percent of the power utility's Indigent clients.

"They only needed one bulb," she said, describing the absentee in Meralco's Tondo District. "I was not for money making then we took over that company. And we bought it with our own money."

Sought for comment, Osmeña, who later became senator, said Marcos' widow "continues the original propaganda line of the decent because of their embarrassment."

"Why did they not just release us, like they released Ninoy (Aquino) and save us all the trouble? Like they released (Rolcas, Ramon) Mitra, Blas Ople[sic], Chino Roces and many others?" he said of her claim that guards turned a blind eye to the escape.

Double cross

The Lopez family—through the spokesperson of their flagship power firm, First Philippine Holdings Corp.—said that Jaime Ongpin had "double-crossed" the holding firm were in financial danger during the 1970s, as claimed by the Marcoses.

"When my father was interviewed by Nick Brown of Philippine Times on Dec. 31, 1979, he said in no uncertain terms that 'the Meralco sale was a giveaway to save the life of my son,'" according to a statement by First Holdings chair Oscar Lopez to reporters.

"What is no old sick man like my father is do?" he said. "His son was being kept hostage and being threatened for execution. The business had been taken over by [ousted military boss.]

"Anyone in that situation would sign anything under such duress," he added.

According to Oscar Lopez, Marcos "double-crossed my father" by keeping Geny hostage even after he signed everything they wanted him to sign.

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Suspected kidnap gang member with string of cases nabbed in N. Samar

By Jocelyn R. Uy

A SUSPECTED MEMBER OF A NOTORIOUS kidnap gang with a P500,000 bounty on his head was arrested by anti-kidnapping operatives on Wednesday, a police official said yesterday.

Jaime Sabanes, allegedly a member of Boboy Kidnapping-for-ransom group, was captured at the Balicuatro Ferry Terminal in Allen, Northern Samar, said Senior Insp. Leonardo Espina, chief of the Police Anti-Crime and Emergency Response (Paner).

"He has been involved in 33 documented cases of kidnapping for ransom between 2003 and 2009," said Espina during the weekly Talakayan sa Camp Pvlo at Camp Crame yesterday.

Sabanes supposedly had a hand in the abduction of 10 members of the Filipino-Chinese community in Metro Manila, the Cabahastan and Cristal Lazon between 2002 and 2005, said Espina.

In 2006, the suspect supposedly figured again in two kidnapping incidents. "Last April, he and his men been on watch again," he added.

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Bicam approves report on bill freezing rent for a year

THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES has approved the conference committee report on a new rent control bill which proposes to impose a one-year moratorium on rental hikes and a seven-percent cap on increases until 2013.

The bicameral committee reconciled the provisions of Senate Bill No. 3160 and House Bill No. 6098 in a bill to replace the old Rent Control Law that expired on Dec. 31, 2008.

Besides the provision on the one-year moratorium on rental hikes, the bicam also agreed to impose a seven-percent ceiling on annual rental increases for units charging rent from P1 to P10,000 in Metro Manila and P1 to P5,000 in other areas. This is lower than the old law's cap of 10 percent.

"This is one of those instances where we worked in a bipartisan manner. Both the majority and minority worked in how this passed," said Bayan Muna party-list member Teddy Casiño, who introduced the moratorium provision with other party-list representatives.

He said more than 1.31 million poor families living in rented houses, plus hundreds of thousands of bedspacers and dormitory residents will immediately benefit from the new law.

Casiño said he hoped the bill would be signed into law before Congress adjourns on June 5.

He said the prohibitions would apply to house and lot units, apartments and other dwelling places, including boarding houses, dormitories, rooms and bedspaces.

It also includes residential units used for home industries, cari-cari stores or other business purposes which double as dwelling places for the business owners. —Philip C. Tubeza

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Revilla son wins ₱2.4-M award for road accident

By Norman Bordadora

A SON OF FORMER SEN. Ramon Revilla Jr. won an award of more than ₱2.4 million against the operators of a passenger jeepney he and some pals crash-collided in 1997 and left the four "90 percent permanently disabled from doing any kind of work."

The Court of Appeals ordered JMP and Sons Calixtan Bustamante, the owner of the coupe truck, to deliver Gabriel Lorenzo and property operator Nicanor Cortes to pay Jovelyn Bautista the P2.4 million, upholding a decision made by the Quezon-line, Cavite Regional Trial Court in 2000.

Revilla filed the complaint for damages in 1998 in behalf of Bautista, who was just 17 at the time of the accident.

The collision occurred on the morning of Oct. 24, 1997, on the General Emilio Aguinaldo highway in Barangay Habay, Imus, Cavite.

The court said that a physician, Dr. Ferdie Sanchez, summoned to the scene of the accident, Bautista was "permanently paralyzed and cannot sit or stand up or walk without anybody assisting him and this will subsist through the rest of his life."

Sanchez also said that the injuries that Bautista sustained could have been avoided if it were for timely medical attention.

Jovelyn Bautista, a niece of Bautista, testified that before the accident Bautista was strong and healthy, was a member of the Ile La Salle University dance and ball team and was a business administration major at the same university.

She also said that "her brother had a girlfriend at the time and had so many friends, but they have all gone."

The court said that the collision could not have happened if the driver of the passenger jeepney had merge truck had "exercised due diligence in maneuvering their respective vehicles."

"Without both of them establishing first their right of way, there can be no other conclusion than can be inferred except the driver both at fault," it said.

The appellate court ordered the payment of P1,418,658.72 in actual damages, P500,000 in moral damages; P800,000 in exemplary damages, and P50,000 in attorney's fees.

However, the driver of the passenger jeep in Cadaanan Angeles, escaped liability as the trial court failed to take him into its jurisdiction because the summons could not be served.

The Quezon-line trial court decision in the 2000 civil suit initially awarded more than P2.8 million in damages, including P2.7 million for loss of earning capacity.

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INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

Provision of Architectural and Engineering Design Services for the Proposed Twin Registry of Deeds Building of Lungsod City' Alley and Registry of Deeds Building of Tuloid, Lanao del Norte

The Land Registration Authority, through the appropriation for Capital Outlay under supplemental Budget No. [illegible] intends to apply the sum of ₱[illegible] being the Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) for the Provision of Architectural and Engineering Design Services for the Proposed Twin Registry of Deeds Building of Lungsod City' Alley and Registry of Deeds Building of Tuloid, Lanao del Norte. Bids received in excess of this ABC shall be automatically rejected at the opening of the financial envelopes.

The Land Registration Authority now invites bids for the above Contract. Bidders of Joint Venture shall have been licensed and registered with the Philippine Contractors Accreditation Board (PCAB) and must be current and valid for the type of work required in the contract, i.e., Joint Venture License. Each partner of the Joint Venture must submit a valid and current Certificate of Registration and Membership in the category required to participate in the project.

Bidders shall have completed, within the period stated in the Instructions to Bidders, a contract similar to the Project. The description of an eligible contract is set forth in the Bidding Documents.

Bidders may obtain further information from the Bids and Awards Committee Secretariat and inspect the Bidding Documents at the address given below during office hours from 8:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M.

A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased by interested bidders on the dates and at the address given below from [illegible] upon payment of a non-refundable fee of ₱[illegible] for the Bidding Documents.

It may also be downloaded free of charge from the website of the Philippine Government Electronic Procurement System (PhilGEPS) and the website of the Procuring Entity, provided that bidders shall pay the non-refundable fee for the Bidding Documents not later than the submission of their bids.

Bids must be delivered to the address below on or before 10:00 A.M. [illegible]. All bids must be accompanied by a bid security in any of the acceptable forms and in the amount stated in ITB Clause [illegible].

Bid opening shall be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures as specified in the Bidding Documents. Bids will be assessed using the non-discretionary pass/fail criterion specified in the Bidding Documents.

The Land Registration Authority reserves the right to reject any and all bids, declare a failure of bidding, or not award the contract at any time prior to contract award in accordance with Section 41 of RA 9184 and its IRR, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected bidder or bidders.

For further information, please refer to the Bids and Awards Committee Secretariat at the address given below.

Bids and Awards Committee Secretariat
Land Registration Authority
LRA Building, East Avenue cor. NIA Road
Diliman, Quezon City
Tel. No. 9204726/9205811

(SGD.) REMIGIO B. ANTIPUESTO
Deputy Administrator
Chairman, Bids and Awards Committee

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Richael Yap
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Melvin Gascon
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GMA: Merged party proves 2010 polls on

From page A1

For months now, the administration has been of parts to kill speculation that it pushes the amendment of the 1987 Constitution to national elections in 2013.

The merger comes in a time when Malacañang dilies in the House of Representatives continue to debate a measure that seeks Charter change and is seen by critics as a means to extend the President's term.

With the merger, the administration now controls 80 percent of all representatives, 72 percent of governors, 71 percent of city mayors and 73 percent of town mayors.

'Finest weapon'

Ms Arroyo, who chairs the new merged party, talked to leaders and members to vow to fight as "one" to retain the "beautiful leader" in the country.

"The emergence of Lakas-Kampi-CMD as one party is our finest weapon and politique our best guarantee for success in the 2010 election," she said.

Ms Arroyo said this victory should be achieved cordially: "Let us strive for victory which not only our party but [also] the entire nation and our character can claim as their own. Let us achieve victory in the context and manner of clean and credible leadership worthy of the Filipinos' democratic traditions."

After all, successful elections are part of her 10-point agenda, the point of out.

"Let us win and become not just powerful, but to win because we are united and because ours is a program of performance and delivery for the good of our people," she said.

For the 2010 elections, Ms Arroyo called for an alliance between local government units and the Armed Forces against "enemies of the state" as a "major campaign plank."

"In 2010, let us have none of our LGUs floating with the current of the strife," she said.

"I ask administration candidates to take this up as a key government thrust and openly support those who pledge to push peace and development and oppose collaborators of those who seek violence to overthrow our government and impose their obsolete ideology on the people," Ms Arroyo had earlier ordered state security forces to crush the domestic communist insurgency before her term ends next year.

On 'legacy' mode

Upon arrival at the hotel close to 11 a.m., Ms Arroyo walked around the ballroom while some bemused with white banner bearing the name of the merged party.

She worked the crowd, hopping from table to table, before taking her place in the stage decked with balloons and flowers.

She sat through the speeches of Speaker Prospero Pichay, her political adviser Gabriel Claudio and Interior Secretary Ronaldo Puno, as well as the reading of five joint resolutions of the merger while sitting pretty.

In her speech, Ms Arroyo said that with the administration's 2010 political machinery in place, she was now switching to "legacy" mode for the remainder of her term.

"The next 14 months will be final, biggest push ... to the poverty and unemployment and address the powers and reforms to serve with missions, health, education, services and other forms of good to all our communities," she said, adding:

"I need you all with me to this so we can give our nation a legacy of lasting opportunities and foundations for peace, economic upliftment and the promotion of human dignity."

Critical mass

The President reminded Lakas-Kampi-CMD leaders and members to frame "national harmony" through the new party.

"The [merger] is a paragon and necessary ingredient to political harmony not only within the administration coalition but [also] throughout the country," she said.

"The call for national harmony and stability must emanate from us to coordinate the political majority. It must take root first in our backyard. Indeed, our merged party is big enough to provide a critical mass, a veritable momentum toward national unity and solidarity."

Ms Arroyo described the "fusion" of the two ruling parties as "appropriate" and "timely" in the face of the global economic downturn.

"I am sure that as a party, the administration could move ably away the 'bat from the others of this global crisis."

Ms Arroyo said the new merged party should work to remain as "economic conservatives among political parties in order to keep our economic fundamentals between national economic interests and our obligations as members of the economy of all mankind."

Mechanism for reconciliation

"I need you all with me on this and united," she said. "Here at least in our house, there is an orderly way for small hurt to be one, set to rest and win as one."

The President also pointed out that it was always easier for the government to bring up issues to the people if local officials were not at odds with one another.

"And I am glad that our merged party will have a mechanism for reconciliation, if necessary, the adjudication of disputes at the local level," she said.

Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita, then the retired Armed Forces vice chief of staff, joined the three Empowerment Rep. Jose de Venecia to forming Lakas-Tau, the forerunner of Lakas-CMD, to back Ramos' candidacy.

Asked yesterday who would benefit from the Ramos political template, Ermita said it would be "whoever is pushed by the merged party."

He merely smiled when asked if he was advising to Teodoro.

'I have what it takes'

Teodoro said he would have "quit a long time ago" if he were bothered by De Castro's pedestrian in the survey.

"I am not bothered by some issue on the party are anxious about my survey ratings," he said in a statement. "This is a concern that I am addressing. I am running for president not on three popularity but on the basis of my conviction that I have what it takes to be the next leader of the country."

Asked why he should be given standard-bearer, and not De Castro, Teodoro replied: "I have a vision of healing political wounds. I can get along with anybody. I can be an agent of unity. I have a proven track record, proven competence particularly in the very important area of security."

The idea that he slide down as De Castro's running mate in 2010 did not sit well with Teodoro.

"I've already said I want to be nominated as president, and that's what my supporters have want," he said. "It's useless to talk about options right now."

National convention

Teodoro said he was waiting himself available to the administration in its possible post-

THE CHAIR'S CHAIRY OFFENSIVE President Arroyo, chair of the newly merged Lakas-Kampi-CMD party, wait for the seat bearth of members to pose with her as a souvenir of the "historic" event while Defense Secretary Gilberto Teodoro and Interior Secretary Ronaldo Puno, a potential presidential tandem, exchange, perhaps, warm close pleasantries

Teodoro draws louder applause than De Castro

From page A1

mentioned strong showing in the surveys "could change overnight."

"[It's chance] and very good, very good. I'm told the bosses of in the changes was officially ousted by President Macapagal-Arroyo.

Teodoro assured as the hand with leaders: Aces Miguel Zubiri and Manuel Lapid in tow and was repeatedly applauded throughout the hourlong orbit.

As star pairs, Ms Arroyo approached Teodoro and shook his hand.

Gabriel Claudio, Ms Arroyo's political adviser said Teodoro had "endeared" himself to many Lakas-Kampi-CMD members for some reasons that he would run for president, if he were given the chance. "Whether that's very good for the economy of all mankind."

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'Historic moment'

But first things first: He suppressed that the Lakas-Kampi-CMD hold a national convention first.

"One more, one vote," he said, adding that he would submit to the party's selection process as long as all party members would participate.

"There should be a national convention so that all members of the administration coalition will have their position, and just a few more," he said.

He added that party leaders should adopt "acceptable and democratic" methods in choosing the administration's standard-bearer.

Honeymoon still

But while Teodoro was categorical in his aspiration, De Castro remained noncommittal on his political plans.

The Vice President told the reporters that talk about his political plans and possible running for 2010 was premature.

He said he wanted to focus on his tasks as Vice President, as leading chief, as the President's adviser on overseas Filipino workers, and as chair of the Task Force Against Illegal Recruitment.

"I know many would weed on my political plans," De Castro said in a statement. "I am studying my options and I believe there is a proper time to make known my decision for 2010."

He added that he intended to devote the rest of his term to "programs that are most beneficial to the people" and to "help our nation weather the crisis at hand."

Claudio, who chaired the Lakas-Kampi-CMD unification committee, said the subcommittee was being "pursued" with De Castro.

"We were, we are happy and content with his presence in this assembly; that he accepted our invitation to attend this gathering, for him to break bread with the leadership of the party, to come in contact with the members of Lakas-Kampi-CMD," Claudio told reporters.

"We consider that a very positive sign," he said.

The new party's national executive committee is to screen the possible nominees and announce its choice in time for the Nov. 30 deadline for the filing of certificates of candidacy.

'Kiss of death'

In a statement he issued before the merger ceremony, Teodoro said: "My position is unchanged. I will join the process and will run for president only if endorsed by the party and President Arroyo."

He said he would vigorously seek Ms Arroyo's endorsement "even if the political opposition repeatedly says that [her] open backing would be tantamount to a 'kiss of death' to presidential hopefuls" Ms himself.

He called on other presidential aspirants seeking the nomination of the ruling party and the President's blessings not to be ashamed of making public their intentions.

"There is no need for anyone to be hypocritical about it," Teodoro said. "I have no reasons to feel ashamed about my ambitions to unite the President and her administration. To me, it is only proper that I seek her blessings, first and foremost, because she is my boss."

He also expressed the belief that he would secure the ruling party's nomination given the "overwhelming support" he had been getting from coalition leaders.

Nikki's 'threat'

Teodoro's wife, Padie Susy Almario, "Nikki" Perez-Teodoro, said on Wednesday that "very powerful people" were prepared to back her husband if he would not be nominated by the administration coalition.

But remarks have piqued the interest of Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez, a member of Ms Arroyo's inner circle, who said it was inconceived upon her to explain what "might be misconstrued as a threat."

In an ambush interview before the launch of Lakas-Kampi-CMD, Gonzalez said Nikki Teodoro should name her husband's backers.

He said her remarks would weigh against her husband's chances of securing the endorsement of the ruling coalition.

In a separate interview, Teodoro said it was not in intention of his wife to make a threat.

"She called [Teodoro-Jr] right. She was literally talking the things she was told," he said.

Asked if he supported his wife's remarks, Teodoro said: "Of course, those are my wife's sentiments. Who will not support his wife. 100 percent! I'm very thankful for the support of my wife."

Asked about the "very powerful people," he said: "They will proceed if there's a need to arise this. I will not talk about it since you might think it's just [unbridled thinking]." With a report from Cynthia D. Balana

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2 fugitive Fil-Am brothers deported to US to face raps

TWO FILIPINO-AMERICAN BROTHERS who came to the country 12 years ago apparently to evade arrest for gang-related violence have been sent back to the United States by the immigration bureau.

Immigration Commissioner Marcelino Libanan yesterday said Marvin Adam Hernedo, 35, and his brother Peter, 34, were deported to the US based on a request of the US Federal Bureau of Investigation and the International Police Organization (Interpol).

"The Hernedos never long resumed by federal authorities in the United States for a string of murder and unsolved murder cases," Libanan said in a statement.

Libanan said the brothers spent 18 months at the immigration bureau's jail in Bicutan, Taguig, following their arrest in their rented Quezon City condo on Sept. 13, 2005.

Libanan said the deportation orders issued by the BI Board of Commissioners against the Hernedos on Dec. 5, 2005 could not be implemented after the brothers filed a petition for habeas corpus before a Manila court.

"It was only on March 23 this year that the Manila court dismissed the habeas corpus petitions, thus paving the way for the forcible deportation," he said.

Immigration Associate Commissioner Roy Montes said the brothers were placed on the BI's watch list in 1997 after they left the US apparently to escape prosecution for several murder cases.

"The brothers are undocumented aliens as the US State Department has already cancelled their passports," Montes said.

According to FBI records, the brothers are "extremely violent" and belong to the dreaded Asian Boyz gang, a group suspected to be behind scattered gang-related murders in 1995.

Montes said Marvin was facing six counts of murder, 15 counts of attempted murder and four counts of conspiracy to commit murder with a firearm.

"He is wanted for his alleged involvement in the murder of two Hispanic gang members in the Bay, California, wherein one of the victims was shot 43 times," he said. Marlon Ramos

Marrying rape victim won't get cop off the hook

ONE OF THE POLICE OFFICERS FACING rape charges in North Cotabato has asked his alleged victim's hand in marriage, investigators said tying the issue won't save him from facing administrative liabilities.

A five-member internal affairs team has been sent to General Santos City to investigate Police Officers 1 Raul Uriad and John Rodes, both accused of raping a police applicant last week.

According to Chief Insp. Alexander Barrios, a police spokesperson, Uriad and the victim have stated their intentions to marry to elude a criminal case.

But administrative charges against the two non-commissioned officers would be pursued as ordered by Region 12 police director Chief Supt. Fidel Closson Jr., said Barrios in a statement yesterday.

Barrios said Rodes has been granted bail while Uriad will remain under "restrictive custody" of the Regional Investigation and Detective Management Office in Tandilan, General Santos City. Analyn R. Uy

Law studies learn about elections, HR

WITH LESS THAN A YEAR TO THE NEXT elections, law students from all over the Philippines will be getting a taste of politics this they might face in 2010.

Election Commissioner Rene Sarmiento will brief members of the Association of Law Students of the Philippines (ALSP) on legal challenges in the 2010 elections when the group holds its 20th national convention from May 29 to June 1 at Xavier University in Cagayan de Oro.

Lawyers have figured prominently in past elections, manned by protests and legal maneuverings by candidates claiming poll fraud.

To prepare the members for any contingency, the ALSP is dedicating all of one session to the country, made "Responding to Legal Challenges" the theme of its 20th anniversary.

The future lawyers will also learn about the human rights situation in the Philippines from the chair of the Commission on Human Rights, Leila de Lima, according to Jong D. Bolano, ALSP public relations officer.

Other lectures up on the convention include updates on the galvanizing of the September bar, the role of law in the peace process, and topping the list.

The ALSP is accredited by the Integrated Bar of the Philippines, the Supreme Court, and the National Youth Commission. It is also a founding member of the Asian Law Students Association or ALSA.

Bolano said prospective participants may reach him at (0912) 769 2080 or secretariat-land@yahoo.com or at +63-(33) 1502355.

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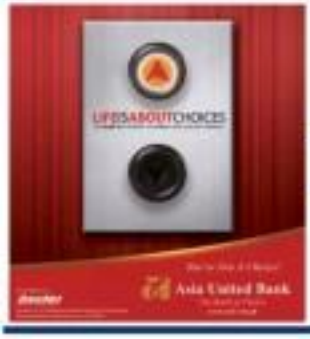

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

OPINION

The flu

EDITORIAL

THE TOTAL NUMBER OF CONFIRMED A(H1N1) virus cases in the country has now risen to 18. And the Department of Health says we should expect the total to rise some more. Time is double our efforts in preventing, or at least slowing down, the spread of the so-called swine flu.

The good news is that the very first two patients—the 10-year-old girl who arrived on May 16 from the United States and Canada, and the 58-year-old woman who arrived from the United States on May 19—are expecting to be discharged from the hospital as soon as new medical tests confirm their full recovery. Health Undersecretary Mario Villaverde said the two were no longer infectious. "At present their contacts have all tested out negative or do not have signs and symptoms of flu."

The bad news is that two new patients—a 26-year-old woman and a 55-year-old man—could be considered, in Health Secretary Francisco Duque III's words, the country's first "second-generation transmission" of the swine flu virus. The two were not infected overseas, but from an "index case," one of those patients who had caught the virus while abroad.

Thus, Duque said, the DOH was "expecting more confirmed cases in the coming weeks due to its intensive contact tracing and heightened awareness among the public."

Fire things first. "There is no cause for the public to panic," Duque emphasized in a news briefing. He said the case fatality ratio for the virus was "very low" (less than 1 per 1,000 cases). He added that the emerging "global circumstances is that (the virus) is a mild form of influenza illness." The chief of the National Epidemiology Center, Dr. Eric Tayag, also said that the medical condition of the new patients was not serious.

Second, more and more Filipinos are now aware of what to do. "When in suspicion," Duque said, "in that anyone who has traveled to an affected country or has been exposed to a confirmed case and manifests symptoms like fever, cough or sore throat [should] go to a doctor or call the DOH hotline, 711-1001."

But an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.

Duque is right to strongly advise the public not to panic. At the same time, he and other government officials must come to terms with the reality that, for many Filipinos, heightened awareness does not necessarily translate into effective prevention.

We would not be surprised, for instance, if many Filipinos see the thermal scanners at the airports (now a daily presence on network TV news) as an adequate line of defense. It never was; it cannot be. But now that we have confirmed cases of second-generation transmission, the DOH might do well to work with television networks (and newspapers too) to change the thermal scanner as the image of the metaphor for, swine flu prevention.

Much good has been done by the new emphasis on vigorous hand-washing. That is a good thing, and should be continued, with the greater participation of the private sector. St. Luke's Medical Center in Quezon City, for instance, has a most helpful colored graphic (borrowing how to properly wash hands (including interlacing of fingers and scrubbing of fingernails). These graphics are posted all over the hospital. They would be even more useful outside the hospital setting. If a hospital like St. Luke's can reproduce the graphics in inexpensive paper and circulate them in the residential communities that surround it, think of the good it can do.

More companies can anticipate the possible spread of the virus by issuing post-facto, new employee guidelines. If possible, an employee who comes down with any of the symptoms of the swine flu can arrange to work from his or her house. Proper hygiene can be re-emphasized, and the home the right lesson from President Macapagal-Arroyo's carbon: a few days ago) institutions must provide clean garbage cans.

We are, famously, a gregarious people. It will be difficult to prevent people from attending social gatherings like weddings or birthday parties. The example of the first two second-generation patients, who caught the virus while attending a wedding in Zambales province on May 17, may make many pause, but it will not stop many of us from showing up.

All the more reason, then, to step up our efforts to prevent or slow down the spread of the virus, with the vigorous support of these institutions—business enterprises, schools, churches—that depend on the very idea of people coming together.

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How much did Villars pay in income taxes?

AS I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz

WE MAY HAVE LOWER ELECTRIC RATES soon, but not because of the recent election of new directors to the Meralco board. Rather, it is because of two bills filed by Senate President Juan Ponce Enrile.

Senate Bill 3147 amplifies the tax system adopted in the country during his father's time so that it would eventually lead to lower electricity rates. SB 3146, on the other hand, proposes that the government's royalties in the exploration, development and production of indigenous energy sources shall be reduced to 1 percent of net proceeds.

If passed, the two bills will usher in an era of improved and better power services to consumers. Specifically, SB 3146 will allow a 5 percent franchise tax for single-proprietorship income of all distribution utilities like Meralco. It will abolish all other taxes currently being paid by distribution companies and to the local franchise tax imposed by local government units, viz: an added vat and corporate income tax which are ultimately passed on to consumers.

These taxes are the reason why power rates have become unreasonable and this encouraged the continued transfer of what should have been part of the cost of doing business to the consumers. If you look at the bills of our electric bill, there is a long list of charges being levied on you, the consumer, which have nothing to do with the amount of electricity you consume. They are taxes levied by the government on the distribution utility, including income tax, plus other expenses of doing business which should have been recouped by the company but which are passed on to the consumer.

The multi-taxation system on distribution utilities has been going on for many years now. It is time we invented to the old system of imposing franchise taxes on public utilities like power and water. I have always been very efficient while enjoying a more equitable tax regime. In addition, the bill lowers the generation charges being shouldered by end users.

Detractors may say these twin measures are a reward to the electric utilities for their inefficiency, but they should not gloss over the fact that they would serve as an economic stimulus and provide businesses from closing shop by reducing power costs, which is a significant cost of their operations. "The Philippines has the highest power rates in Asia after Japan. It is what prevents foreign companies from investing in the Philippines. Coupled with graft and corruption, long red tape and insufficient infrastructure, high power costs make us relatively third-rate basis for doing business in the Philippines.

Speaking of taxes, Sen. Manny Villar was again declared the richest senator and his wife, Las Piñas Rep. Cynthia Villar, the richest member of the House of Representatives, according to their statements of assets and liabilities. Alright, but the people would also like to know if they are paying personal income taxes proportionate to their wealth.

It is easy to inflate one's assets, especially if your assets are mostly real estate, like the Villars'. The price of real estate depends on who is making the estimate. A potential seller and senator and congressman in a race for mates in Congress and politics—will naturally inflate their price. A potential buyer, on the other hand, will deflate them. It is also said that a public official who places no real wealth in his assets, while an official who has already stolen would inflate them.

I think the law should be amended to make personal income taxes (not corporate income tax) paid by public officials part of their assessment of assets and liabilities that they are required to file every year. No taxpayer should be allowed to check them against what was actually collected from them by the Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR). That should make honest taxpayers of our public officials and not merely braggarts.

The computer has been touted as a valuable aid to doing business quickly and efficiently. Not always. Sometimes, it can hinder them, as the Government Service Insurance System (GSIS) has learned out.

Some ago, the GSIS installed a computer software supplied by giant IBM with the GSIS system to make the processing of benefit claims for members more speedy and efficient. The move has turned, in the words of GSIS itself, "into a nightmare." The GSIS is now having difficulties processing the claims and benefits of members, pensioners and other beneficiaries, as well as in posting payments made to the GSIS.

The GSIS has been enrolling 1000 Filipinos for years to fit its database management software, which lies at the very of the problem. So less than 300 threats to has admitted that the IBM software is to blame, but the company's local representatives have not been giving the tech after-market service.

When IBM has done to like selling you a lemon of a car with a shiny finish, and then telling you have sleepless nights dealing with the lemon. Instead of following the adage that "if you get a lemon make lemonade," the GSIS is fighting back. It has threatened to sue IBM to court if it does not fix its software immediately.

What IBM has done, GSIS sources said, was to upload a "patch" on a call wires to fix MS-Outlook-based management system in use by the GSIS, but that the problem still persists.

Two local affiliates of IBM, Quest tech and SAP have also come out in the open to say that the IBM system, for lack of a better word, is a mess. "sucks."

The GSIS maintains that despite the software problems, the integrity of its members' records is intact and that it is already considering third-party IT sources on how to deal with the problems. Nonetheless, it has not ruled out the threat on IBM, leaving the possibility open for the computer firm to do what is right.

A week when disgrace took its toll

PASSION FOR REASON

Raul C. Pangalangan

THE PAST WEEK SAW LEADING POLITICAL figures elevated-framed into congestion in the British Parliament) and death (in South Korea, while here in the Philippines we wonder how much shaming it would take for politicians to go beyond a conventional "I am sorry" speech on prime time TV.

The members of the British Parliament were found to have abused their parliamentary allowances—and public outrage has forced the speaker to call for their resignation. Some of the MPs are in disgrace. The only other time a House speaker was thus ejected was way back in the 17th century. Some other MPs holding government appointments have been suspended, and several others have offered to return the illicit sums received, together with apologies to their constituents.

The MPs had charged the taxpayers for luxury home furnishings, high-tech gadgetry, swimming pool repairs, even dog food and, unbelievably, "moat maintenance." The biggest shocker, for rebels-loyal to the opposite Tony Blair and Gordon Brown have profited—was for housing subsidy for those who had to maintain a second home as they worked between their constituencies and London. Generally the MPs exploited the subsidy by "flipping" the first and second house designation (and in one case, to three other properties over a two-year period), and enabling reimbursements to cover home improvements for both. Worse, the list from Peta MPs, representing the political wing of the Irish Republican Army (IRA), showing rental reimbursements for London properties far with above market, even though they had not claimed up their parliamentary seats.

All these apparently were legal and technically unobjectionable rules. But a measure that particularly riled the British public—that the rules had been manipulated and their trust betrayed. And indeed some of the guilty MPs have declared that they wouldn't seek re-election, because the voters, feeling cheated that legal protection of the law-making, would not happily abide by their bought the bullet box.

In our part of the world, South Korea's former President Roh Moo-hyun has thrown the British Parliament out of their box of shame. Indicted on corruption charges, he fought to be the first ex-president to go to jail in a country used "I am sorry" speech on prime time TV.

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Comments to pajarillo@yahoogroups.com

Merger and fissures

ANALYSIS

Armando Doronila

ALL OF A SUDDEN, THE SCRAMBLE FOR places in the party machine being built by cohorts of President Macapagal-Arroyo for the 2010 presidential election has accelerated.

The catalyst of the rush to jump on board the bandwagon was the merger between Lakas-CMD, the largest party in the House of Representatives, and Kampi, the Arroyo-led seven-party, ad-official launching environment at the Manila Hotel yesterday. The monolithic coalition was launched in the tarnishing atmosphere of the historic venue where the dominant parties during the pre-martial law democracy (1946-1972) held their political conventions to choose their candidates.

The merger marked the reemergence of the hegemonic single-party monopoly of power that prevailed from the Commonwealth period (1935-1941), dominated by the Nacionalista Party led by President Manuel L. Quezon. Through their merger, the two leading parties are floating their trial for 12 months before the May 2010 presidential election.

Despite the hoopla at the Manila Hotel yesterday, which was described as a "selection process" of the administration's candidate, the two parties, Lakas and the administration standard bearer, the party can not hardly democratic. The selection was dictated from the top, not by the party rank and file, and in reality addressed the control of the selection to President Arroyo. Last January, the Lakas-CMD leadership, which has overwhelming numbers in the top of presidential, senatorial and local candidates in preparation for the election.

The merger also revealed the cracks in the coalition's constituent. The acrimony was provoked by the announcement of Social Amelioration Secretary Esperanza Cabral that he is resigning from the cabinet, the merger parties for the vice presidency, as the running mate of Vice President Noli de Castro. The announcement came on the eve of the historic swing of the merger. It gave a head start to the De Castro-Perez team and projected the perception that the team had the blessing of the President.

Although the announcement gave the initiative to Malacañang to set the pace in the campaign, it provoked a rupture among the ranks of administration supporters who believe the initiative had on the ground under the auspices of other presidential aspirants, like Senate President Juan Ponce Enrile and Senator Manuel Villar, which has the most number of representatives in the House. The merged party counts 56 governors (29 from Lakas and 27 from Kampi), and 140 members of the House of Representatives (91 [59] from Lakas and 49 from Kampi).

There is a question of who will benefit from the merger in the light of the uncertainty over whether the President will step down in 2010 or push for a constitutional change that will shift out presidential system to a parliamentary system.

Whatever develops in the next 12 months, the President holds the key to the success of a monolithic political vehicle. She controls the purse to finance the campaign of the merged party's candidates down the line.

The larger point back the party system to the single-party monopoly of the Commonwealth days. The Marcos dictatorship restricted the party to subtitle system after he demolished into party democracy in 1972. In further of the following Ongoing (Ongoing 2006) party dictatorship. But dictatorship is not Presidency's attempt to restore the single-party state will succeed, remains a matter of conjecture.

She is trying to do that in the context of a multiparty system that President Corazon Aquino restored after the 1987 Constitution. Her predecessor, Fidel Ramos, tried to restore the Marcos dictatorship. Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo was successful in installing the hegemony of the Nacionalista Party because the party monopoly. But the nationalist state of independence. She called the strategy of the nationalist movement behind the Pambansang Saulo Marcos succeeded in reinventing the single-party domination through a dictatorship and imposed it from above. Ms. Arroyo is in reality already a functional Nacionalista serving out her elected term.

The possibility that party revival is imposed from the top and lacks party rank-and-file foundation. This is its greatest weakness.

Digital robbery

Michael L. Tan

STILL DEBATE PRESIDENT JUAN PONCE ENRILE HE HELP to finally crack down on the ubiquitous or mobile phone scam pit-stickers? ALSO. The senator is still going strong with his fiery tirades, and the other day he zeroed in on the telecoms and the National Telecommunications Commission (NTC).

The fiery senator didn't mince words, describing the telecoms' gimmicks as "crooks," "cheating," "fraud." I thought of "highway robbery," a metaphor that surely is being victimized on a digital highway, or it's digital robbery.

Two issues in particular irked the senator. First, he said, how will phone loads

PINOY KASI

are handled, citing his own experience that had gotten him so irritated. He had loaded P600 the previous morning, and found in the afternoon that though he had not used the phone, the balance dropped to P535. The next morning it was down to P445.

Second, the senator lashed out at the phone companies sending him messages he didn't want, especially because he felt he was being charged for those messages.

For years now Filipinos have suffered, usually silently, from the telecom companies' lack of regulation. It fattened to the NTC, and, assuming it's still functioning, apparently this is a global problem. European consumers, for example, had to put up with outrageously high roaming charges whenever they went to another country within the continent. Consumers complained and complained, but it was only last year that the European Commission was able to get the companies to bring down rates.

Cell phones are fairly recent additions to communications technologies so many governments are still learning how to deal with all kinds of new situations, e.g., "sexting" or the sharing of sexually explicit photographs and videos through the phones.

But our NTC might want to learn from other countries' experiences. A good place to start would be looking at policies about loads on prepaid cards. As far as I know, these loads do expire in all countries, the length of validity depending on the amount deposited. But I think the validity period in the Philippines is much too short, with a maximum of four months, at prices which very few people are willing to pay (reflecting how economically depressed the Philippines is). e loads which last only a few days. Contrast those short validity periods with those in China, for example, where loads can last as long as a year.

Don't ask, don't tell

One important notice we (and here is regular notification about prepaid loads) is that we don't use it—calling or texting—the telecoms won't tell you what your balance is. In many countries, the telecom companies notify you regularly by sms/text your having to call or text. They do this when your load is dropping to very low levels, or when it is about to expire.

Last year, on a trip to Thailand, I signed up for "virtual SIM card" from AIS, one of their telecom providers where they create a second card on your phone with a local number which you can then charge with e-loads. It is an amazing system that works on all phones, even those without a dual SIM function. With each incoming phone call, you can tell if a is having a low load, or how much P&R of the load.

A great service but what was even more amazing was how they handled loads. When I got back to the Philippines, the virtual SIM number disappeared from my phone, but after a few weeks, I was surprised to get a text message informing me that the remaining load to my Thai virtual SIM was about to expire. I had completely forgotten about and was down before the expiration. On the day of expiration, there was a last friendly invitation to reload, and to say thank you for using AIS.

Robust practice makes for good business. Every time I visit Thailand, I top up AIS to get their best virtual card. If I reload my Philippine loads, I don't feel too bad.

In the Philippines, however, some up one day to find they've lost their loads, sometimes amounting to P300 or P500. It leaves the customer feeling that he has gotten a raw deal as he just keeps postponing a reload, or even throws away the old card.

The second issue Enrile brought up was about unsolicited messages, presumably as part of marketing campaigns, of which there are several types, each needing a different kind of remedial measure.

First, there are overnight scams, usually saying you've won a prize from a gossip and telling you to call or you can get your prize. Do not encourage magnanimity from young godknowing telecom pranksters. There is also nothing to get the money. I ignore these texts, but wonder at times, to do may, if perhaps there are still gullible (and are defrayed people who fall for such crams.

I don't think the NTC can do anything about this, except to coordinate with the police to offer a hotline where you can report such scams. The next step is that the con artists change their numbers too quickly to be caught.

The NTC can and should act, maybe with the Department of Trade and Industry, on another kind of unwanted texts: unsolicited business offers, mainly from banks offering "low-interest" loans. How can ever wondered how your phone number got out from the hands of those cell phone companies? I inquired once with my bank, a large international one, and found out they had given out my number to other companies for "promotional affairs." Check with your banks, and credit card providers and request them to respect the confidentiality of phone numbers.

The telecoms like Smart, Globe, Sun—complaining about probably came from the telecom itself. Many realities have been released here, with the telecoms asking if you want to get a ringtone a day, or celebrity news (read gossip). They never run out of gimmicks, including outright deceptive invitations on handling the offers. I'll never forget a sms (the letter of the alphabet) I received from Smart, which I suspect was sent to those messages, press 9 to continue getting these offers, press 01. Individual, I thought, knowing how so angry person would press 01 as a way of saying No. No, No and actually ending up saying "Yes, I want to subscribe, each time get not for daily updates on Boyfriend and Katrina."

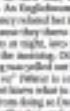
I hope the senator continues to harass offering those telecom services, a SIM card that works as a landline. I've run through several companies and they're generally unreliable. Worse, my father got into a two-year locked-in contract from which he couldn't get out, even with the almost non-existent connection.

So I switched to one with those USB sticks offering Internet connections. Always read the fine print on how you are going to be charged, and how fast the connection really is.

It's a digital jungle out there.

Email: mtan@inquirer.com.ph

Education in sanitation



LOOKING BACK

Sandy B. Grangco

"ICE" "HERPS" "CHOLERA" "FLOOD" "MALARIA" "Bubonic" These are terms you hear every day when Filipinos are confronted by someone or something disgusting. The preferred exclamation of, course, reflects social class, but this is a topic for another column.

In the last meeting of the Association for Upgrading the Standard of Living (AUSL), water was the thing was discussed and everyone agreed that clean potable water would be one of the critical issues of the 21st century. Nobody was keen on using recycled water at home. Water that is not clear and odorless is considered unclean. Even I could not imagine attempting drinking (but not swallowing) filtered, and purified urine while traveling in space.

Our aversion to germs comes from the way we are taught in schools, as well as the way our parents raised us because they too went through schools where they were warned against germs and the importance of cleanliness. In the library, we have water dispensers and bottled water, my mother would tell me during water like would not allow us to use respect drinking vessels when we were out of the house. So if the did not have her portable cooler with frozen water in covered plastic containers, she would bring bottled water. Soap was from clean paper for us to use. My mother's formative years were spent in a pre-war public school that inculcated sanitary practices that she passed on to her children and grandchildren.

Memories of home and mother came flooding in as I read Dr. Ramon Layug Valte's "Colonial Medicine: American Tropical Medicine, Race, and Hygiene in the Philippines" (Ateneo de Manila University Press, 2007), which argues that part of the "civilizing process" brought by the Americans to the Philippines had something to do with health and hygiene.

Several members of the Philippines at the turn of the 20th century remain many descriptions of how beautiful the archipelago was and how filthy the people were. Americans made reference to their sensitive and how they were taught to wash their hands, cut their nails, fix their hair, and wear clean, pressed clothing. An English-born American, Dean C. Campbell (1887-1963) related his 1910 union with her neighbors because they threw the urine, collected from pits pots at night, into the street when they went out in the morning. Other accounts reveal that a stunning was pulled out because this was done. "Apoy si ng" (Police) to call out that people in the street throw their waste. Vividly among the neighbors from doing so (Americans's husband would yell at offenders and call them "dirties!" That almost always did the trick.

Another Englishman, G. J. Youngbluthard, narrated the sanitary activities of the American who organized a battalion of sweepers to clean the streets from under the houses in Manila. A sweep then was no proper way of disposing waste or tossing them into the soil for fertilizer during the Spanish period. This was true both in baby's bidet of the elite as well as the slops bins of humbler folk, where the pigs and dogs would feed on the garbage. Epidemiology required proper disposal of everything.

In our days, we still see the traces of American period sanitary campaigns and education in signs that read "Bawal umihi dito" (Don't urinate here). Worse, I saw a sign near the entrance of Intramuros that read "Bawal magbigay ng limos" (Refrain from "giving ang volunteer ng limos" (Beggar) the future of God. To not debates here.)

Our Department of Tourism gives awards to clean cities, when these should actually be the norm not the exception. Chapter 4 of Andersons book, entitled "Inconvenient Colonialism," is an engaging read because in 1911 the Bureau of Health in Manila declared that human waste was "more dangerous than arsenic and strychnine" and that "dysentery, typhoid fever, cholera, and bacillary diseases are transmitted in succession especially if whether he be king or peasant, with minute organisms that, probably have passed through the bowels of another person."

Filipinos were described as "promiscuous defecators" who didn't use their "oriental intestinal contents as fertilizer." Of course, they were contrasted with the Americans who were scrupulously clean, responsible, and "inventive." Penalties and fines were also a lot to interpret from Filipino ruler behavior.

I have written a number of columns on America's sanitation before, like the collection and prosecution of "night soil," the "night soil road" "cultural anthropology" I wrote one all this as part of the American mission to civilize the Filipinos. Andersons had a point when he put all these in the context of race and colonialism. It's a fascinating study because while the Americans tried to adapt to life in the Philippines, they also tried to change it to the ways Filipinos lived through education and the founding of the Bureau of Science and the Bureau of Health. It was not only sweets that they sought to reach, but control of the body as well, especially what came out of the mouth (to spitting and to "scientific" smoking campaigns) and the accommodation of both solids, liquids, and (effective).

Anderson mentions that in 1909 the Bureau of Science had examined over 7,000 fecal specimens and at the beginning of the 1914 cholera epidemic the bureau had 150,000 jars of feces!

Not very engaging topics indeed but worth a second look to the fight to live colonial history.

Comments are welcome at sbcomp@ateneo

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'An issue of great concern'

I FULLY AGREE WITH PAPEJCJ JOAQUIN C. BOBIS: Who can resist president's cute 2030 should be in an issue of great concern to us. [A passion to serve," Inquirer, 5/14/09]. It is certainly the dream of well-meaning Filipinos to have a president with a passion to serve his/her people. We should therefore start taking the necessary steps to bring this dream to fulfillment.

As concerned Filipinos search for a leader with a passion to serve, let us begin to reach out to the majority who are misinformed, poor and misguided—with the same passion that we must have our leader... to share with them our conviction that all must win in May 2013, with the traits and capabilities of a good leader foremost in our minds. The way a much greater number of Filipinos would be able to contribute something to the cause of good governance.

—MARIOS C. TIANGCO,
mario_tiancy@yahoo.com

Physicians' group to give Kho his 'day in court'

THE PHILIPPINE MEDICAL ASSOCIATION (PMA) is appreciative of the statement of media and the public in the drive to have our media fix to the medical profession. Thank God the number of such intellects minimize!

The high and the mighty and many other sectors of society condemned Dr. Hayden Kho after his amorous adventures in the electronic media were exposed...even though the circumstances of his case have yet to be clarified. In such scenario, when a (basic-if motivated voices cry "crucify him," history warns that before casting a stone, one should respect justice and prejudice and be wisdom, reason and objectivity prevail.

The PMA's Commission on Ethics adopts the adage that even the condemned deserves justice. Dr. Kho was invited to have his "day in court" and the ethical case against him will be subjected to due process.

—DR. EDITHO S. DE ROSARIO,
chair, Commission on Ethics
and Medical Practice,
Philippine Medical Association

LETTERS

Worse than prostitutes

INQUIRER'S APRIL 27 EDITORIAL HERCUMULINE interpreting it to mean the three lady justices who acquitted US Marine Daniel Smith of rape, to emphasize the "indecisiveness" that obviously makes their decision a "denial of reality." These justices may have labored to deny reality in the face of dazzling evidence and grave misconduct, but they were prudent and not indecisive. They may not really believe that Smith is not guilty of rape. In the indecisiveness that practically discredits their decision may be the result of their half-hearted effort to justify an erroneous verdict predetermined by them. One can even say they did a good job of not making a wrong verdict look right. Although a Filipino rape victim we call "Nicole" was raped all over again and more intensely in our own courts of law, the absurdity of it makes redress inevitable.

The conduct and outcome of Nicole's case have degraded our national dignity and sovereignty, the worst of us ghost over the outcome of this case. In his April 23 column, Ramon Tulfo wrote: "Why should you side with Nicole who wanted a 'quickie' with a handsome stranger and then complained of 'being raped?'" Tulfo added, "When one gets drunk, inhibitions fly out the window. It was probably the first time for the innocent and definitely not for Nicole at many Zamboanguitas who know her well will say."

But Tulfo has not really asked any Zamboanguitas who do know her, him/her? So apart her the libel, Mon. She's been diagnosed sociopathically.

Now, let's say she wanted sex with Smith. What she objected to was sex with Smith in full view of other drooling soldiers in the van. Even some wanted gruesome mental images to this. It wasn't passion for romance but lust unbridled by moderation urged for the dignity of a Filipina that spurned the overly privileged American soldier to have himself upon. Be overly intoxicated Pinay which made this entirely unromantic and a consummation.

Incidentally, Tulfo had earlier suggested a way to prevent a rape accusation. In his April 7 column, he wrote: "So long as the American GIs pay for the 'fit' and don't rape any women, what's wrong with that?" Was he implying that Filipina who want to like with GIs for American prominence, as there would be nothing wrong at all with the debasing sex women? One thing is clear, Tulfo is openly and shamelessly endorsing, on the Philippines' most read newspaper, the prostitution of the Filipina. We title at a Dr. over-enthusiastic calling as a "series of servers" while right here a Filipino columnist is contributing to it become a nation of sex servants.

Prostitution is the insidious and more dreadful form of rape because it pushes its victims to voluntarily partake in the desecration of their own bodies and souls. The prostitutes are still well within the reach of redemption, unlike the self-assured (self-misled) exhibitors and avid patrons of prostitution who declare "What's wrong with that?" and go on raping.

Last April 19, another Filipina was allegedly raped by another US Marine. Will the issue either reject go unnoticed, covered-up, or unjustly punished? When will we, as a people, cry out?

—REYNALDO SEBONA,
El Deposio, Tacloban, Leyte

Yes, Mandaluyong gave Mendoza hero's welcome

THIS IS WITH REFERENCE TO THE NEWS article "Filipino director back home after Cannes triumph," (Inquirer, 5/25/2009).

The report said that "unlike the warm welcome usually accorded to returning celebrities, such as boxing legend Manny Pacquiao, not a single Nota official (nor Hadiance) Mendoza, who earned the respect of the festival jurors with his gory film 'Kinatay.'"

To set the record straight, may we inform the public that Mandaluyong City under the leadership of Mayor Benhur Abalos, had given Mendoza due recognition even before he was flown in to the limelight at the Cannes Film Festival.

Upon the instruction of Secretary Ronaldo Puno, he (Puno) in the city, along with other Mandaluyong residents who have excelled in their respective fields of expertise, was given the "Ulirang Mandaluyong Award" (Arts and Culture).

Upon his arrival at the Nata Terminal 1 last May 27, Mendoza was greeted by hundreds of supporters and well-wishers from Mandaluyong. The mayor himself met the city's official host to welcome this genuine son of Mandaluyong.

Banners and tarpaulins have also been in prominent areas within Mandaluyong to show our great appreciation to Mendoza who has proven his mettle by beating better-known contemporaries from around the globe.

We hope that this information will correct the misimpression that nobody took notice of Mendoza's arrival and gave him a hero's welcome. The residents of Mandaluyong did.

—JIMMY REGINO,
chief, Public Information Office,
Office of the Mayor, Mandaluyong City

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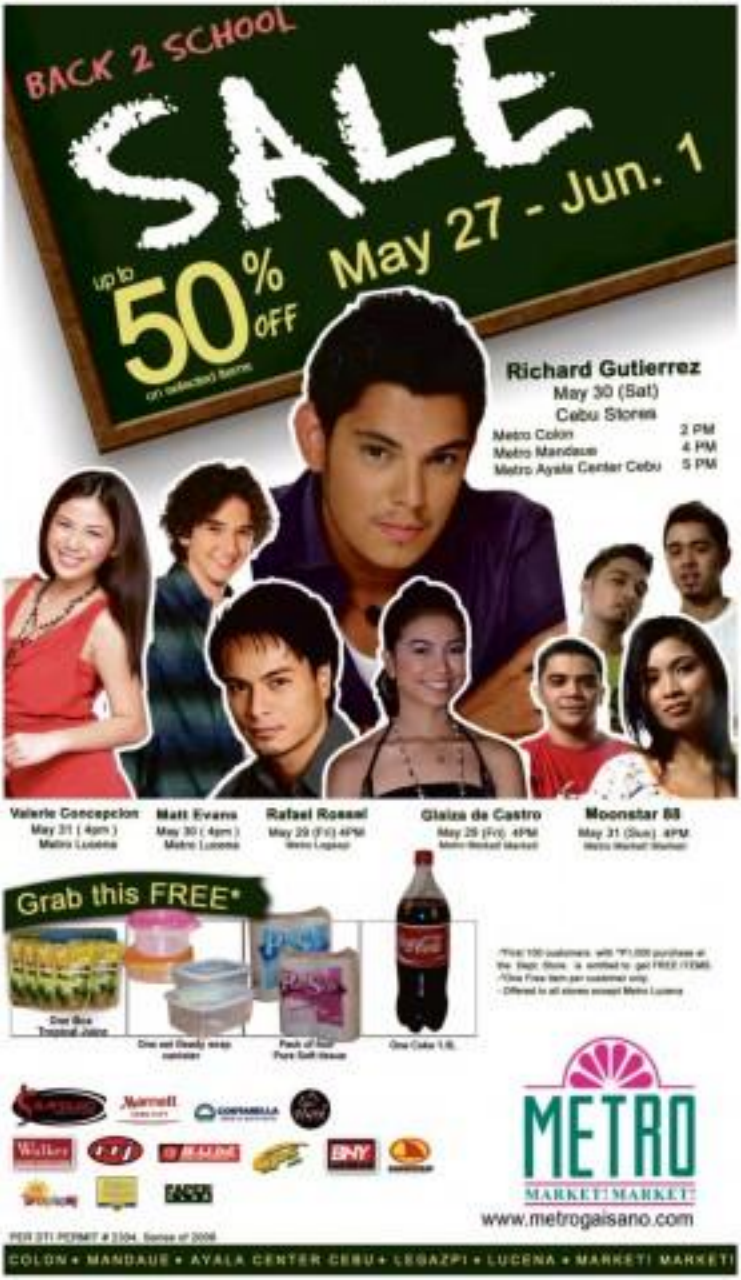

Lakas-Kampi cracks show

From page A1

the 'resurgence of Lakas-Kampi-CMD as one party is our Bosin weapon and perhaps our best guarantee for success in the 2010 elections." (See story on Page A1.)

"Disobeying Thomasites—and there were many—said that the merger between the two biggest political parties in the country would not come to pass. The road to this merger has neither been short nor easy. The road ahead is likely strewn with more challenges and trials but we have made a great leap of faith and statesmanship today," she said.

Makati Mayor Jejomar Binay, president of the United Opposition, lobbied for the merger, saying in a statement it is "a dusty era and appears headed for disaster."

The supposed "formidable political machinery" resulting from the alliance would not overcome the public's dissatisfaction with the Arroyo administration, he said.

"Ms. Arroyo will be the issue in 2010, regardless of the popularity or credentials of her anointed candidates; they will have to defend her record to governance," he said, adding that the President's endorsement would be the "kiss of death" for any candidate.

Sleepless or self-quarantine

Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita said Ramos arrived from the United States as drawn, a few hours before the coronation. "He must be sleepless," Ermita told reporters.

Ramos, Lakas founder and chair emeritus, had confirmed he would attend the launch, Ermita said.

Gabriel Claudio, chair of the national unification and consolidation committee, said the convention had been sent from last week knowing that Ramos was available only this week.

"I don't think so," he said when asked if Ramos boycotted the convention. "We have been reporting to him the developments leading toward the formalization of this merger."

Ed Hiding, spokesperson for Ramos, said that the former President decided to go on "self-quarantine" after coming from the United States, but would face the media this afternoon to explain his side.

No sign of cracks

"I don't think so," Claudio said when asked later by phone if the absence of key officials was a sign of cracks in the party.

"We should look at the entire convention. Let's not focus on the people who are absent. The attendance was impressive and the mood was upbeat, he said."

At the launch, Speaker Prospero Nograles, former president of Lakas, described the new party as a "powerhouse party" that would produce a "higher standard of political leaders."

As expected, Villafuerte, who confirmed on Wednesday that he wasn't joining the merger because some preconditions he set were not met, did not show up either.

These preconditions included the resolution of local conflicts and the identification of provincial, district and municipal chairpersons ahead of the merger.

Lakas officials were divided over whether Villafuerte's decision would leave a big dent on the new party.

"I would say this is a dent. But how big it is, I can't say," Aurora Secretary Raul Gonzalez told reporters before the formal signing of the merger.

Ermita disagreed. "I doubt it. The secretariat of Kampi is here. The Kampi officials are here," he said.

Shotgun marriage

Ermita said he hoped the strict Kampi members of the new party would abide by its Constitution and bylaws. "I'm very sure that they will shape up in accordance with the party aspirations," he said.

Claudio said all doors remained open to Villafuerte, extending the lawmaker for playing a key role in the merger.

He explained that the committee decided to go ahead with the merger and endorse Villafuerte's preconditions later so there would be no delay.

Ramon Casiple, chair of the Institute for Political and Electoral Reform (Iper), described the merger as a "shotgun marriage" forged by Malacañang in a bid to preserve a single presidential candidacy.

"But if that presidential candidate does not have a serious chance of winning," he said, "more likely than not, people will begin leaving."

Kiss of death

Casiple said that administration politicians were "bandying" on Dr. Cortes to become their standard bearer, but the Vice President was concerned about Ms. Arroyo's "kiss of death."

"Cortes has not been able to improve on her political plans," he said, adding that others were saying that she's worse than the dictator Ferdinand Marcos.

He said that in the 2007 elections, all the senatorial candidates Ms. Arroyo endorsed lost.

"So for Noli, that's the dilemma. He needs the machinery for sure. He needs the support of Gloria and yet he cannot be pinned beside Gloria. So how will he get around that?" Casiple said.

He added that this was the issue Dr. Cortes had contained when she met her political allies.

"The moment he becomes a candidate, so the ruling coalition's candidate, that's going to be a problem. He has to defend Gloria's record and Gloria herself," Casiple said. With reports from Allison M. Lopez and Philip C. Tubeza

Gloria visits to Pampanga raise doubts

From page A1

second congressional district, the province's most vote-rich area.

Which left many wondering: Is this simply the big-hearted gesture of a proud mother, or the total show of a President looking beyond her term which ends in 2010?

Ms Arroyo often steered clear her official itinerary, even if it entailed barreling through rough mountainous terrain or swerving villages that the Presidential Security Group had not sanitized in advance.

She would do all these, for example, just to check if it was feasible to install power lines in a remote Aeta village, give out checks for livelihood projects, inspect bridges, roads and even canals, or hand over farm tractors or threshers.

And whenever she went, medical and dental missions for her turbulent (unrepentant) were not far behind.

The Presidency has performed such "acts of generosity" that its hosts would call them merely in the second district, which covers the towns of Lubao, Sasmuan, Dinalupi, Macabebe, Porac and Floridablanca.

In her latest visit here on Wednesday, some local officials began taking notes of her body language.

When a climate turned into a heavy downpour in the wee afternoon to have for the Clark Perimeters, Ms Arroyo boarded a coaster and had the windows rolled down as the could were at reactions or shake hands with those within reach from the vehicle.

Unscathed as, dumbstruck go (it's already morning and she's still wearing her hard), one official observed.

PM Gloria?

During the visit, a nonpublic power switched on the façade of a two-story government building read: "Pamilyang Maasahan" (A family you can always rely on).

The poster featured photographs of the two governors of the Macapagal family. The President is father, the late President Diosdado Macapagal; Ms Arroyo who served as senator, Vice President and President; and her eldest son Mikey, the incumbent congressman of the province's second district.

One joke making the rounds that day went like the iconic "SM" adage in Ms Arroyo's canceled plan to run for prime minister after the Democratic form of government.

Lubao Mayor Dennis Pineda, also president of the Pampanga Mayors' League, does not think so. "She's here for projects," said Pineda, whose wedding among (godmothers) included the President.

'She couldn't lose here'

For Clodualdo Yñiag, release Dolore Manalo was a close friend of Diosdado's. Ms Arroyo's frequent visits should be read as "a daughter's fulfillment of her father's unfulfilled promise."

Yñiag, 76, was referring to Diosdado's pledge that entailed he win his reelection bid in 1969, he would give Pampanga a Tondo-sized (second serving)." Macapagal lost to Ferdinand Marcos in that election.

Still, Yñiag said "she (ang inaambisyon nang mga) pa...Baka sin nang Jonathan Arjo (Ms Arroyo's will not lose if she runs for public office here. Nobody might even run against her)."

According to Yñiag, the President has a house built near the St. Augustine Church in Lubao. Ms Arroyo is a registered voter in the town's Barangay San Isidro.

'If Boces had Marcos...'

In Floridablanca on Wednesday, she spent 30 minutes ahead of the 10 a.m. program there. In Porac, she spent an hour at several donation stops in two Aeta villages in the west and in Hermosa, Bataan.

In Mabalacat town, Aeta elder Anita Manalad told a dancing crowd: "If Boces (had) a Marcos, we have a Macapagal-Arroyo. So many presidents had come and gone and only she had awarded us titles to our ancestral domain."

TIME LINE

GMA visits to Pampanga in 2009

Feb. 26—Attends the awarding rites of the Inaugural Set of the Philippines-Pampanga chapter and addresses her provincemates in a grand rally. Both events are held at the Clark Freeport.

—Inaugurates an irrigation service in Floridablanca.

March 4—Goes to Barangay Sabanilad in Candaba to hand P10,000 in financial assistance to 10 former rebels who surrendered to the military in Pampanga, Bulacan and Bataan.

March 9—Meets with San Fernando Arts Advisory Council members.

March 10—Holds a Cabinet meeting in Clark, then motors to Barangay San Roque in Lubao town where she meets former rebels who have surrendered their firearms.

March 15—Goes back to Barangay Concepcion, Lubao, for a meeting with farmers and leaders of irrigators' associations.

March 23—Inaugurates the new three-storey public market in Barangay Maniga Cacutud, Arayat.

—Attends the groundbreaking for the Ricardo P. Rodriguez Memorial Hospital in Candaba.

March 29—Visits three relief-affected evacuees in Camalaan town along the Pampanga River to check on infrastructure projects built by the Armed Forces of the Philippines.

April 8—Celebrates birthday, attends Mass celebrated by Archbishop Antonio Ledesma and 10 priests at the St. Augustine parish church in Lubao.

—Leads the oath-taking of 128 members of the Citizens' Armed Force Geographical Unit Active Auxiliary—symbolically the military from Lubao, Guagua and Sasmuan towns.

In almost all visits, Ms Arroyo would call on some of the beneficiaries to join her onstage and ask them to talk about their lives and how government projects have improved their lot.

Among farmers, a usual topic: ideology runs her father's land reform program and how it freed peasants from abject poverty. Some of the farmers old enough to remember President "Undersiyi's" administration would then lavish praise on "The Best Boy from Lubao."

Ms Arroyo has also been observed to greet apparently right away when approached by local officials.

On-the-spot instructions

When Barangay Nabuklod Chair Alfredo Santos requested his village's outer supply problem, the President called for Lt. Gen. Isagani Cachuela, chief of the military's Northern Luzon Command, and instructed him on the spot to build an impounding dam to collect water from a stream.

And upon hearing word from another local official, Carlito Tugano, that his community still lacked electricity, the President reviewed her schedule and seemed to be to-

—Has lunch with local officials and Pampanga priests at the church hall, hours the funeral mounted by the Department of Trade and Industry at the church hall.

April 30—Inaugurates the San Basilio farm road in Barangay San Basilio, Sta. Rita.

May 8—Addresses some 300 farmers from Pampanga, Bulacan and Nueva Ecija who are gathered in San Fernando for the farmers' Day celebration; gives P10 million in fund partly to be used to convert subsistence into organic fertilizer.

May 11—Visits Mount Pinatubo crater in a helicopter as a public relations' launch Mounted Mayor negotiable seeds for distribution to farmers, officials for fishermen and tricycle-bingerings for the fiesta operations, hands out P500 health cards and scholarship certificates.

—Visits remote coastal village Barang Dos, the first President to do so, and hands cross from a hundred cash gifts recommended for school activity worth P1.25 million.

May 22—Comes in Sta. Rita for the final day of 11 Sta. of Cacuta, or Apung Diang, speaks to some 2,000 residents.

Deputy presidential spokesperson Lorelei Fajardo calls the President's frequent visits to Pampanga "payback time to her provincemates." She says the visits should not be seen as part of early campaigning activities, since Ms Arroyo has not stated that she is going to run for a seat in Congress in 2010.

Compiled by Allan Horecia, Inquirer Research

Sources: PGI Archives, Office of the President Official Website

Just 'revisiting'

"Revisiting" visits how Silvio Dayh Gutierrez for Development Council (NEADC) Secretary Edgardo Pendatun described the President's forays in Pampanga.

"I think she really would like to spend the last year of her term visiting her home province. She wants to spend substantial time with her relatives," Pendatun said.

"She wants to leave a good legacy to Pampanga," the President's deputy spokesperson, Lorelei Fajardo, said. "For now, she wants to ensure that the projects in her province are in place before her term ends."

But Fajardo maintained that the visits to Pampanga had not interfered with the President's duties as national leader or his other positions.

Defensor to drop perjury rap against whistle-blower

From page A1

February 2008 to prevent him from testifying in the Senate hearing on the aborted $329-million ZTE deal.

"I am no longer interested in pursuing the case," Defensor said in a letter to the Manila Metropolitan Trial Court judge.

"While I am very much determined to seek relief for the criminal acts committed by Mr. Jun Lozada that caused serious injury upon my person, I feel that I may not be able to obtain impartial justice," he said.

He said that a "cursory reading of the orders" issued by the court would show Lozada's "bias in favor of the accused."

Defensor said he would not be able to attend hearings while his lawyers prepare to withdraw his complaint against Lozada.

He lamented that his perjury complaint was being subconsciously as a harassment suit just because of his "pronounced alone relationship" with President Macapagal-Arroyo.

"It is a plain, convenient and legitimate action seeking relief for the wrong done upon me and my family," he said.

Lozada said that since he could not dismiss the case merely on the basis of a letter, he set the trial proper for June 11.

Personal confirmation

The judge hoped that Defensor would attend the hearing so he could personally confirm his intention not to pursue the case.

"Until he confirms that he is indeed withdrawing the complaint, there is always the possibility that the case would continue or be revived. It's like Damocles sword is always hanging over Lozada's head," he said.

Lozada regarded the withdrawal of the case as a "victory of the people."

However, Lozada's lawyers are not satisfied with Defensor's letter, which one of them even described as "very ambiguous" and "doublespeak."

"This letter is not yet considered closed just because he sent a letter signifying his intention to withdraw the complaint. He should formally withdraw it under oath," one lawyer said.

'Let us pray'

Lozada earlier issued an order asking Defensor and Lozada to amicably settle the case.

Upon receiving Defensor's letter, Lozada asked those in the courtroom to say a thanksgiving prayer, saying Defensor seemed to have listened to his appeal to withdraw the perjury case against Lozada.

"Let us pray for Jun Lozada, his family and the father of Mike Defensor who advised him to withdraw the complaint," the judge said.

Lozada earlier said that the Palace was trying to pressure him to inform himself from the perjury case. He, however, refused to name the supposed Malacañang emissary.

Katrina, Hayden face off in Senate

From page A1

the start of the hearing, which ended with tension smoothing the involvement of big-time drug dealing in the scandal.

The inquiry conducted by the Senate committee on penals, women and family relations dragged by into Jimmy Madrigal started an hour late at 2:40 p.m. because the lawyers of Rhu and Hidilli took time clarifying on their respective positions on whether it should be open to the public.

Senate President Pro Tempore Jinggoy Estrada argued with Rhu's lawyer Loren Legarda that he cannot Rhu is clearly openly.

Estrada got more annoyed when Madrigal informed the senators of Espinosa's appearance denial—that she said her client would walk out if the senators insisted on a public hearing.

Media's presence

Legarda then inquired whether there was a need for the media to be present.

"Whether or not there is media, the law will be made if the Senate so desires," she said.

Considered Sotto said: "That statement is cancelled for. I never threatened anybody. What kind of threat? I don't even know you.

"Sen. Clemente the committee when you said your group would stage a walkout."

But also told Espinosa "not to question the legislature's motive," and added that she had "no right to lawyer us."

"I demand the presence of Rhu in this hearing," Estrada said, drawing loud applause from the audience made up of spectators and Senate employees.

In the end, Estrada and Sen. Ramon "Bong" Revilla voted to have Rhu testify openly.

Espinosa made an apology, and Estrada accepted it.

Eventually, Rhu, accompanied by his mother, was brought in.

A few minutes later, Hidilli, also with her mother, came in.

As she went to take her seat, a man in a red shirt picked up a bottle of water from the table, opened it, and poured it over Rhu's head.

As people stood, a Senate security guard grabbed the man from behind and dragged him outside the room.

"Please never that man. Arrest that man," Madrigal man heard saying.

Espinosa rose and said: "That's precisely why we objected to a public hearing."

She said it was fortunate that her client was only soaked with water. "It could have been a bullet because of the hatred," she said.

Rhu's mother wiped his soaked hair and white shirt with a handkerchief. Rhu himself was cool.

Hidilli appeared distraught and close to tears.

Senator targeted at actor Jose Balagtas told the senators that the man was Abner Afuang, a former policeman who, he said, had "a media ID."

It turned out that Afuang is a columnist of the tabloids Hataw and Police Files.

Last night, Afuang was taken to the Pasay City prosecutors' office upon the recommendation of the Senate's legal counsel in face charges for disturbing the hearing.

Tears

The hearing eventually proceeded with Hidilli, 23, tearfully reading a statement on the ordeal she was now living as a result of the scandal.

Speaking in Filipino, the actress gave thanks for the support that, she said, allowed her to rise from her mistake and the dehumanization she had endured from Rhu.

She said she was an activist whose job was to provide laughter and humour in television and to Rhu, but that she also had a private life like everyone else.

"I loved Hayden," she said, adding that her youth made it easy for her to be blinded that she would "owe his heart."

"But like all other relationships that started with a lie, this went nowhere," she said.

Hidilli says even easier while saying that she did not favor "such embrace and kiss" she exchanged with Rhu was "scripted."

"I gave my heart and soul wholly to a man who turned out to be doing his own movie," she said, adding:

"I was stupid. Instead of a doctor, he was a director."

Hidilli also said she had used to loving Rhu and to believing that he loved her back as well.

She said I was his princess in his several words," she said. "I was young; it was easy to make me believe. I am the victim here. Every day I see the victim each time the video is watched."

She added that even if she were dead, the video would continue to play.

Drugs

She said he met Hidilli in 2007 at the dance contest by his girlfriend, Dr. Vicki Belo.

He said he performed liposuction on Hidilli in August 2007 and that soon after, then became very many.

This was how Rhu narrated the purported acts of events:

They soon became lovers and Hidilli introduced drugs to him in a tryst they had at a hotel in Ortigas.

Hidilli gave him two Ecstasy pills. He seemed only one, but she told him it would not be effective.

"This resulted to the first video where I was wearing a bandana and briefs," Rhu said, referring to the video where they were shown dancing to the music of "Candice Whisper."

He said he could name the people who bought drugs for Hidilli.

He claimed that he had been clean since his confinement at Makati Medical Center in December 2008, when he tried to kill himself with a drug overdose.

Denials

Hidilli denied that she had introduced Rhu to drugs, or that she was taking drugs herself.

She also denied being aware of the camera when they were having sex.

She said she would undergo a drug test at the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency (PDEA) today.

She said the drugs had come from Hidilli, and that being a doctor, he knew that "Ecstasy stays in the blood for eight days, and it will stay for six years in the hair."

"I challenge Katrina Hidilli to a drug test," he declared, and expressed doubt that the PNoy had a facility for testing hair for drugs.

Hidilli insisted that the issue was about the abuse she had received from Rhu.

She said she had been unemployed since February, and had lost endorsement projects.

"I can't leave my house, and when I see people, I would wonder if they saw the sex video," she said.

Looking at Rhu, who was seated a few seats away, Hidilli said: "Ang lupit ng ginawa sa Ashcaltigat ka pa ng ganyan! Dinito ako-nasa, the way you're looking at me that way! "

Belo

Absent from the hearing was Belo, who was in Europe filming for a TV program.

Her lawyer Ariel Inumerables represented her.

In an affidavit, Belo admitted that she and Rhu had a sex video as well, but that she had consented to it on the condition that he delete it after their viewing.

She also said she and Rhu split up and that she had asked for friends Eric Jotzmann Chua (also a co-client at the hearing) and Anthony "Boobi" del Rosario to search Rhu's computer for the video.

She said Chua eventually gave her a DVD of the contents of Rhu's computer and found out he had sex videos with Hidilli and other women.

In angst, she said, she "destroyed the DVD."

When asked by senators, Rhu said he did not know who had distributed the sex videos.

"But I suspect it's Eric Chua and Boobi because they had the videos," he said, and apologized for secretly filming the women.

Threats

Madrigal and Estrada tried to get Rhu to say who was the dealer of the drugs.

Rhu refused. He said he had received threats and that he would "not compromise the safety" of his family.

"This guy really has a lot of connections. I'll rather not comment at this point," he supposedly told the senators, who asked if he would tell all in an executive session.

Rhu said the senators would just end up being censored from the Senate, but that the life of his family would be put in danger.

At the end of the hearing, Madrigal said she would prepare a preliminary committee report.

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Across the NATION
Assistant Editor Tony Bergonia

'Pentagon' back, takes Chinese tourist

KIDAPAWAN CITY—POLICE AND MILITARY OFFICIALS in Central Mindanao yesterday said the Pentagon kidnap gang has emerged from slumber.

Col. Jonathan Power, spokesperson of the military's 6th Infantry Division, said the gang's latest victim was a Hong Kong Ms. Chinese Coca Koonan as reported earlier) national.

Ms. a naturalized Chinese swearing in the country for the past five months or so, was snatched in front of her clinic in Isulan's downtown at 5:30 p.m. Wednesday.

Rochelle Asunto, a sales associate of Arthan Enterprises, said she tried to prevent the five gunmen from taking Ms. away but one of them hit her.

The abductors, she said, boarded the victim into a white Mitsubishi Lancer with license plate MGB 174.

Pentagon baron

Senior Supt. Jose Calimutan, intelligence chief of the North Cotabato police office, said the vehicle was later recovered by policemen after it was abandoned by the kidnappers in Esna Mountain town in Maguindanao.

"The suspects perhaps boarded another vehicle or they were fetched by a motorboat in the Liguasan Marsh, "he said.

The Liguasan Marsh, which is bordered by North Cotabato, Maguindanao and Sultan Kudarat, is home to Pentagon leader Abunit Tidir.

"There's an ongoing pursuit operation by the military and the police to recover the victim. This is a kidnap for ransom case, considering that the perpetrators are Pentagon members," Power said.

Col. Dominga Gobway, commander of the Army's 7th Infantry Battalion, yesterday said the hopeless that the kidnappers were last sighted in Pagalungan town, also in Maguindanao. Pagalungan is near Datu Montawal where the car was found.

The Pentagon Gang, which operates by toll or small groups, shot into notoriety in the 1990s when it seized Italian missionaries in a series of kidnappings.

At least a dozen Italian missionaries were held captives and released only after the Pentagon got "bored and lodging fees," a euphemism for ransom.

In October 2001, the gang abducted Fr Giuseppe Pierantoni while the missionary was celebrating Mass in Datumbanga, Zamboanga del Sur. Pierantoni was released on April 8, 2002.

It was also behind the kidnapping of five Chinese engineers working on a government irrigation project in North Cotabato in May 2003. Four of the victims were killed in the crossfire during a military rescue operation sometime in June of that year.

In 2007, the Pentagon struck again in North Cotabato and abducted German Thomas Wulfert and Ms. Filipina wife Sharon. The couple was freed unharmed in Pikit, North Cotabato, after several weeks.

The gang was founded by former Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) commander Jul Pentagon and Jeraffey Medrano, Inquirer Mindanao

A POLICEWOMAN holds a mobile phone with the picture of Alice Ho Wa, 24, a Chinese national believed kidnapped by the Pentagon Gang.

DepEd chief issues appeal for release of 3 teachers

ZAMBOANGA CITY—EDUCation Secretary Jesli Lapus yesterday urged the Abu Sayyaf to release to set free the remaining three teachers the bandits have been holding to captivity since March.

Lapus issued the appeal when he met with teachers Perlyn Quinon, Raphael Magwinda and Janeth dela Reyes here yesterday.

Quinon, Magwinda and Dela Reyes were freed by a faction of the Abu Sayyaf in Basilan on Tuesday after holding them in captivity since Jan. 23.

"I have pity on them and their families. It's school opening already and they should be released so they could do service to children," Lapus said.

The Abu Sayyaf is still keeping captive Noami Mandi, Jocelyn Dano and Jocelyn Enriquez, who were kidnapped in Maja, Zamboanga Sibugay.

"I have had items on mind on the fate of the three Nagsa teachers to this day.

Mandi, who went through surgery before the kidnapping, was rumored to have died in captivity but Zamboanga Sibugay officials refused to believe it because of lack of proof.

Lapus said to ensure the kidnapping of teachers in the future, the Department of Education (DepEd) has been working with authorities.

Among the programs, he said, is the Happy Zone project.

Lapus granted the visit of Mayor-elect Quinon and Dela Reyes for transfer from Sanford Gua island here to another school.

"I am giving instructions right now to transfer the teachers to the city," he said. Julie E. Alipala, Inquirer Mindanao

BETTER VIEW
Aetas gather at an elevated site, with some climbing a tree, in Barangay Habalistar in Floridablanca, Pampanga to await the arrival of President Macapagal-Arroyo who visited the Aetas on Wednesday to award certificates of ancestral domain titles. (VINCE RAZ/INQ)

Police dragged into Boracay land dispute

By Nestor F Bergonia
Inquirer Visayas

ILOILO CITY—THE POLICE force of Boracay has been dragged into a controversy involving a land dispute on the island after the island's police chief was removed from his post for alleged partiality.

Silim police director Senior Supt. Clarence Galvez said he had directed Supt. Anthony Magbasi to replace Supt. Arnold Ardiente as chief of the Boracay Special Tourist Police Office (BSTPO) effective Monday.

In a telephone interview on Thursday, Galvez said Ardiente was facing a complaint for partiality and alleged arrest filed by security guards of Winaco Holdings Philippines Inc.

Galvez said Ardiente was relieved to pave the way for an impartial investigation of the complaint filed by the security guards.

The BSTPO arrested two security guards of Winaco last May 19 after a guard shot and wounded two workers of property claimant Ruth Tirol-Jumalilla during a confrontation in Barangay Balabag at the northern end of the 1,032-hectare island.

The workers were putting up fence on a disputed 700-square-meter lot when a security guard allegedly shot at them, according to an earlier report of the BSTPO. The two workers were wounded in the leg and were hospitalized.

Ardiente, who was reassigned to the police regional office in Iloilo City, denied any involvement in the arrest of the security guards.

"I was just doing my job and I was not taking sides," Ardiente said by phone.

He said he hoped the investigation would clear him.

Two teams of policemen have been assigned in the disputed property to prevent further violence, according to Galvez.

Police also initiated dialogues between the feuding parties.

Bong Pineda son rejects Lapid wooing for team-up

CUBAO, MAMPANGA—THE dream team that Sen. Manuel "Lito" Lapid wants to form for his political comeback in Pampanga in 2010 is more kaput.

The plan went down the drain as Lubao Mayor Dennis Pineda on Thursday said he had rejected the proposal of Lapid, who plans to run as governor, to be his running mate.

Pineda said he shot down the offer "out of principle."

"In the 2004 elections, I agreed to ally with the senator's son (former Sen. Mark Lapid) because they promised me they would improve the quarry collections," said Pineda.

"They did not deliver on their promises, which was why my mother (former Board Member Lilia Pineda) ran against Mark in 2007."

Not comfortable

He said he was not "comfortable" running with Lapid when recently to quarry collections had proved to be low.

"If I'm going to run as vice governor, it would be with 'drug (professional basketball coach and Rep Gov Jennifer Cruz). Another option is I run as governor of the party (Kabalikat ng Malayang Pilipino) apparent of it," he said.

Pineda is an ex-third and 8-old term as mayor. He has chaired the Pampanga Mayors' League in the last six years. He is the eldest son of respected barrister Dennis Pineda. Nicknamed "Bong" Pineda and a wedding godson of President Macapagal-Arroyo.

Speaking through his spokesperson, Bernie Cruz, Lapid said he respected Pineda's decision.

Prerogative

"OK na. Prerogative na ni...Mayor ako, ngod kung governor (That's OK. That's his prerogative. No matter what, I'm running as governor)," Cruz quoted the senator as saying.

Cruz said Lapid has started scouting for another running mate but he declined to name the likely replacement.

Lapid, he said, has all the necessities to consider the provincial chair of the Lakas-CMD.

Lapid, a movie actor, began his political career as Pampanga vice governor in 1992, becoming governor in 1995 until 2004. Mark, his eldest son, succeeded him for a term but lost to his re-election bid in 2007.

Shattered alliance

The shattered alliance of Lapid and Pineda is sure to signal another clash between the Lakas-CMD and Kampi in the coming local elections.

Cruz said Lapid had informed President Macapagal-Arroyo of his political plans at a meeting regarding the birthday party of the husband of Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago. Estelito Dorjia, Inquirer Central Luzon

Villagers flee homes as Army, NPAs clash

TAGUM CITY—RESIDENTS of at least two villages in Davao del Norte and Compostela Valley fled their homes as government soldiers launched an offensive against communist rebels, officials said yesterday.

In Salvacion, Compostela Valley, an undetermined number of people left their homes as police clashed with New People's Army (NPA) rebels Wednesday evening.

A former rebel, serving as police guide, went missing during the clash that started in Barangay Maniki, said Senior Supt. Ronald dela Rosa, Compostela Valley police chief.

The fighting went on until early yesterday as soldiers were sent in to help the police.

In Talaingod, Davao del Norte, about 400 tribal families fled their homes due to ongoing military operations in the hinterland villages of the town, a social welfare official said.

Arlene Bendalante, Davao del Norte social welfare officer, said at least 2,000 members of the Ata Manobo tribe fled fighting between government soldiers and NPA rebels.

Most of the evacuees, she said, were from Barangays Palma Gil where the fighting was intense.

Col. Joel Rosero, commander of the 10501st Infantry Brigade, said the flight of the residents was part of an arrangement with village leaders.

Village leaders, he said, agreed to escort residents not to avoid civilian casualties during the military offensives. Wyanet Lim with a report from Dennis Ata-Ata Sinfuego, Inquirer Mindanao

NPA presence in Mindanao remains a force to reckon with for the military, which has suffered casualties and setbacks in recent. Through the capture by rebels of some soldiers, like Pfc. Ronnie Winddel, shown here bidding goodbye to his NPA captors on May 13.

PACQUIAO wants to fight Oct. 3 or ...

Manny prefers M'weather over Cotto for next fight

HE MAY BE GOING TO THE UNITED States to execute his chances against Puerto Rican Miguel Cotto, but Manny Pacquiao's radar is really trained on Floyd Mayweather Jr.

Pacquiao made the disclosure to an aunt, the star appeared in the Bangkok Post recently, when he made a whirlwind visit to Thailand to promote fast Miguel Cotto, which he endorses.

Commenting on the July 18 fight between Mayweather and Juan Manuel Marquez, Pacquiao picked Mayweather to emerge the victor.

"Mayweather has a lot of advantages," Pacquiao said. "He is faster than Marquez and should be able to win. If he does, then I'd like to fight him, although that is down to my promotional team."

Pacquiao is slated to spend vacation with his family in Australia next week before proceeding to New York on July 12 to receive his second award as Fighter of the Year from the Boxing Writers Association of America. The following night, he'll be at Ringside to watch Cotto make his World Boxing Organization welterweight crown against Joshua Clottey of Ghana at the Madison Square Garden.

Top Rank head honcho Bob Arum is banking for a Pacquiao-Cotto fight, tentatively set Oct. 17, because he promotes both fighters.

It is likely to be a long, however, as Cotto doesn't want to go before 140 pounds if he's to get a chance to tangle with Pacquiao.

Freddie Roach, chief trainer of the Filipino ring superstar, thinks Pacquiao should fight Cotto at a catch weight of 143 to 144 pounds—also the catch weight for the Mayweather-Marquez showdown.

If Mayweather wins, there's also a bitch-and-a-half bonus payout for the pound hare fighters isn't inclined to agree to a 30/70 share of purses with Pacquiao, the caveat over pound for pound king, according to a Fightbypass report.

Ben Guerrero

Fiery Lakers trip Nuggets, take 3-2 lead

LOS ANGELES—THE LOS ANGELES Lakers put on a fiery fourth-quarter display to grind out a 103-94 victory over the Denver Nuggets on Wednesday night, evening the top seeds a 3-2 lead in their Western Conference finals series.

All-star guard Kobe Bryant scored 22 points and reserve forward Lamar Odom contributed 18, along with 16 rebounds, as the Lakers maintained home-court advantage.

The Lakers lost 1-2 to the Boston Celtics in last year's NBA championship finals.

Carmelo Anthony paced in a game-high 31 points for the Nuggets, who led 72-68 late in the third quarter before the Lakers finally took control at a packed Staples Center.

Spanish forward Pau Gasol recorded a double-double with 14 points and 10 rebounds while guard Derek Fisher and forward Trevor Ariza each weighed in with 12 points as Los Angeles outscored their opponents 27-19 in the final period.

The last of seven scrimmages in Denver for Friday's Game Six.

In front of a capacity crowd, the Lakers made a poor start, falling 2-9 behind early on before clawing their back to tie the score at 20-20 after a rollicky first-quarter opening period.

Nate Anthony leading the way, the Nuggets led his count of the second period before Bryant set up Sasha Vujacic for a three-pointer just before the half-time buzzer to make it 50-56.

Denver continued to control the pace in the third quarter, Anthony scoring with a two-point jumper and then adding a free throw to give the Nuggets their biggest lead at 71-66.

Reuters

THE LAKERS' Kobe Bryant (left) gets fouled by the Nuggets' Carmelo Anthony. AFP

Barcelona captures Champs title

ROME—LIONEL MESSI WAS HAILED BY his coach as the world's best player after he scored Barcelona's second goal in their 2-0 Champions League final victory over Manchester United and ended as the competition's top scorer.

The match in Rome had been hyped as a duel between the world's two best players, Argentine Messi and United's Portuguese winger Cristiano Ronaldo.

Ronaldo was largely ineffective apart from an early flourish and it was Messi who came out on top, scoring his 9th goal of the Champions League campaign and improving his chances of snatching away his 4th Fifa World Player of the Year crown.

"This is the most important win of my life," Messi told reporters. "I am the happiest man alive and I am happy for myself, for my family and for my country."

Barca coach Pep Guardiola said Messi had been superb for the Primera Liga champions all season, helping net only 16th goals but also with plenty of assists.

"He has done great," he told a news conference. "I think he is the best player and we didn't need to win to know he is the best."

Reuters

Nadal wins record 30th match; Sharapova squeezes through

PARIS—MARIA SHARAPOVA FLIRTED with danger and Andy Murray suffered a mid-match meltdown before their contrasting routines kicked in to carry them into the third round of the French Open on Wednesday.

The duo have never left at home to the first round of clay court tourneys and after Murray was forced to change tactics to save Indian Rohan Bopanna, 6-3, 2-6, 7-5, 6-4, Sharapova maintained an aura of calm despite being five points from defeat to subdue 11th seed Jelena Dassin Nadia Petrova, 6-2, 1-6, 8-6.

Rafael Nadal won a record 30th consecutive match at Roland Garros by trampling Russian Teimuraz Gabashvili, 6-1, 6-4, 6-2.

The four-time champion eclipsed Chris Evert's mark of 29 set between 1974 and 1986—the donations did not compete in Paris in 1974-78—in an up a blockbuster third round showdown with former world number one Gaston Gaudio.

Pfizer's exposed Dmitry Tursh 6-0 raced up her 6-0, 6-0 walloping of Britain's Anne Keothavong in the first round with a 6-1, 6-1 demolition of luckless fellow Russian Vitalia Diatchenko and holder Anastasia discovered her career spot to crush Thai Tamarine Tanasugarn, 6-1, 6-2.

Like Indian, Murray is also chasing a maiden grand slam title.

The 20th seed Murat Safin and Fabrice Santoro, both bidding farewell to Roland Garros, there was no great escape.

Safin clowned, lunged and kissed the net during a 4-6 four-3 defeat but that could not save him from falling to a 7-6, 7-6, 4-6, 3-6, 10-8 defeat by Italy Andreas Seppi.

Frenchman Josselin Ouanna.

Switzerland French Twenty Santoro, also the Belgian, took just eight minutes to perform his first vanishing act.

Santoro's 2005 and final Roland Garros singles appearance ended in an emotional 6-3, 6-1, 3-6, 6-4 first round defeat by Belgium's Christophe Rochus.

French 7th-seed Gilles Simon ousted countryman Robert Kendrick, 7-5, 6-4, 6-1 to reach the third round.

Reuters

NADAL / Sharapova

Garcia bounces back in Subic Open chess

SUBIC—RISING STAR JAN EIMMANUEL Garcia turned the fight for the Philippines to the fifth round of the 2009 Subic Open international chess championship, beating International Master Sadikin Iswanto of Indonesia on Thursday night at the Subic Exhibition and Convention Center.

Garcia, an incoming freshman of Ateneo de Manila, adeptly handled white to stun the 22nd-seeded Indonesian and bolster his bid to the tournament organized by the National Chess Federation of the Philippines.

A celebratory of the Y Lone Chess Club, Garcia also bested Richelino Sabenlo in the fourth round late Wednesday to climb to 3.5 points.

Despite his back-to-back wins, however, Garcia still trails pacesetters Ha Bozhan of China, GM Jiao Thiaw Hui of Germany and GM Chakravarthy Deepto of India by one and a half point with last rounds to go.

Ha and Deepto agreed to a draw, while Diaz toppled top seed Indian GM Surya Shekhar Ganguly, winner of the recent Asian Continental Open championship.

Also with 3.0 points are IM Ignacio GM Mark Paragua, Rolando Nelso, Julio Catalino Sadorra, Richard Bitoon and Darwin Lojo.

Paragua whipped Yu Lie of China while Sadorra and Lojo settled for a draw with FM E. Paladino Jr. and Cheung Chongyi of China, respectively, in the event being supported by the Department of Tourism, Pagcor, Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office and Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority.

Sadorra bowed to GM Nguyen Gia Thuong line of Vietnam while Bitoon lost to IM Ehsan Ghaem Maghami of Iran.

The event, slating $5,000 to the champion, drew 34 players, including 17 GMs. The runner-up and third placer will earn $4,000 and $3,000, respectively.

'Rightful' equestrian chief blasts POC

By Marc Anthony Reyes

THE FIGHT OVER WHO TAKES THE REINS in equestrian rages on.

Empowered by the recognition of the sport's international federation, Equestrian Association of the Philippines president and party-list Rep. Carlos Cojuangco yesterday lashed out at the Philippine Olympic Committee for "depriving" her of the "right" to represent the sport in Wednesday's POC general assembly meeting.

Cojuangco, who was voted EAP head in a disputed election not recognized by the POC, e-mailed the request a copy of the letter from Federation Equestre Internationale chief executive and secretary general Sheridan Hellis, who expressed willingness to recognize her as the duly elected president of the EAP.

"Following thorough analysis of all documents received pertaining to the elections ... we are ready to recognize the validity of the results of your special meeting," Hellis said in his letter to the PH headquarters in Louisiana, Switzerland.

The civil coup of equestrian and POC president Jose "Peping" Cojuangco Jr. however, dismissed the letter, saying it did not constitute outright recognition of Castillanes and her group, which held their elections last April 23.

Cojuangco claimed that the letter specifically said that the FEI has the right to intervene or decide. If presented evidence against the actions of Castillanes's group, that.

"We reserve the right to review our decision should new evidence ... be presented to us by any of the involved parties before 15 May 2009."

Cojuangco said that the FEI has already replied to him after he submitted evidence to prove "that the election of the Castillanes group was illegal." He did not elaborate.

During Wednesday's POC meeting at the Pinoy Whole Golf and Country Club in Mandaluyong, Castillanes claimed that she was not allowed to speak before the assembly even though the POC chair, Rep. Monico Puentevella, ruled that she be allowed to take the floor.

"Mr. Cojuangco and Mr. Joseph's clinched to this ruling and the chair, knowing full well that ruling, neither acknowledged her objection, entertained their objection," said Castillanes.

"It is unfair, not only to me but to all NSAs, that the POC arbitrarily and inconsistently applies rules depending on personality—favor-ably to those allied with it."

PSC on P4M: Take it or leave it

By Jane Navarro

IF THE PHILIPPINE OLYMPIC COMMITTEE doesn't want the money, the Philippine Sports Commission will have one for it to other projects.

PSC chair Harry Angping yesterday said the government sports agency already approved a financial support of P4 million for the country's participation in the 1st Asian Youth Games despite word from the POC that it would disregard the funding.

POC president Jose "Peping" Cojuangco vowed to raise the money on their own on that 70 athletes aged 13 to 17 years old and 30 officials could join in the multi-event competition slated here 27 to July 7 in Singapore.

"The money is available if they wish to avail of it," said Angping. "We will wait for the final word coming from the NSAs (national sports associations) involved.

"If they don't need the money ... we can use the funds for other worthwhile projects."

POC delegation chief of mission Cesar Bixby said the entire delegation would need P7.5 million for the 12-day tournament.

RP Open 10-Ball: Tolentino pushes Souquet to brink

By Cedell P. Tupas

UNBEATABLE WINNER TOLENTINO erased German World No. 1 Ball Souquet, 9-6, this Wednesday night to reach the Round of 16 of the winners' bracket of the Philippine Open 10-Ball Championship at the SM Megamall Megatrade Hall 2 in Mandaluyong City.

Tolentino, a former washing pro in the Middle East, jumped the gun on an out-of-luck Souquet, taking four of the first five racks en route to the Eurotour star's downfall. Also, last Austrian beauty Janeen Guichon in the first round, to the losers' bracket.

"I'm [Souquet] couldn't find his opening and was unlucky with his break," said Tolentino after Souquet's third miss with complete a Remembrance Ordeal for a place in the last eight of their bracket.

Pulpul, a semifinalist in last year's tournament, posted his second straight win with a 9-6 decision over Bek Hon Kong of Malaysia.

Dylan Arias Gomez grid medalist Antonio Gabica and Jeff De Luna also remained unbeaten at the end of Day 2 with Gabica handily beating Ibrahim Bin Amir of Malaysia, 9-2, and De Luna overwhelming Jerard Magadia by the same score.

But the homegrown lad suffered a blow when World Access Realist Jericho Ramirez got the boot after bowing to Singaporean Edrian Chua, 7-6, in the losers' bracket. It was Ramirez' second loss in as many games.

Hidden Miranda, a 9-2 winner over Wilmen Little in the first round, also fell to the losers' bracket, after absorbing a 7-9 setback to Indonesia's Budi Santoso on the television table.

Also, Filipino Jeffrey Pidlaoan bested Mona Aquilesta, who took a 7-9 defeat at the hands of former women's world 9-ball champion Shelly Pidlaoan.

Aquilesta, a former Southeast Asian Games gold medalist, missed the chance to go to World straight win by dumping Korean Jeong Woong-hwan, 9-2, and Gabe Owen easily disposing of Jenni Fulcher, 9-3.

Tigresses, Lady Stags make it 4

By Cedell P. Tupas

UNIVERSITY OF SANTO TOMAS AND SAN SEBASTIAN WASHED up for their much-awaited clash on Sunday by notching their fourth straight victories in the ninth Shakey's V-League quarterfinals yesterday at the FilOil Flying V Arena in San Juan.

Already assured of a place in the Final Four, the Tigresses fought back from a set down to dump Benilde's University of St. La Salle, 20-25, 20-11, 20-11, 20-17, dashing the Lady Stags' hopes of clinching at least a playoff for a semifinal berth.

The Lady Stags also played spoilers to Far Eastern U by scoring a 25-22, 25-18, 25-17 victory in the second game.

The loss prevented the Lady Tamaraws from sticking an automatic semifinal berth. But they can still advance on Sunday if Adamson prevails over Colegio Universidad de San Jose-Recoletos.

A win will also catapult the defending champion Lady Tigresses into the semifinals.

Playing OUT for the first time in the V-League, the Lady Stingers came out strong in the first set, before getting overwhelmed by the Tigresses' quick plays and power game in the next three frames.

"We struggled in the first set but we recovered in the next three as we adjusted on our offense and blocking," said UST coach Gerard Aldos Sinens.

Skipper Aiza Maizo and guest player Michelle Carolino fired 23 points apiece, while Mary Jean Balse contributed 13 points for the Tigresses, who outscored the Lady Stingers, 60-39, on attacks.

Maizo anchored the Tigresses' net defense, coming away with four blocks.

Jocelyn Gastiago and Jhoy Gervacio turned in eight points each to pace the Lady Stingers, who committed 28 errors.

That import Jovenett Baldoz stormed 16 hits while Ryzabelle Devanadera and Lou Ann Lastimoso sired 11 points apiece for the Lady Stags, who counted their 11th straight win in a row that closes back-to-the-elimination round.

The Lady Stags scored nine points off blocks with Devanadera and Analyn Bonito accounting for three each.

Shaina Gonzales knocked in 13 points and Alaine Mamala added 11 for FEU, which missed skipper Rachel Daquis.

SAN Sebastian standout Suzanne Roces goes for the kill off Irish May Morada of Far Eastern U in yesterday's match. AUSTRIA

4 teams dispute 2 q'final slots in PBA free-for-all

By Mycong B. Cuzilla

FOUR TEAMS WHICH COULDN'T REALLY duke it all each other during the classification phase, dispute the final two quarterfinal slot today at the end of the solid-seed phase of the Metrolite 1988 Hottie Cup at the Araneta Coliseum in Cubao.

Gene Cole battles Bro. Lorin at 3 p.m. and Facebook clashes with Talk 'N Text in the 7:30 p.m. encounter with the winners advancing opposite respective foes starting Sunday.

Rain or Shine awaits the winner of the Gene Cole-Bro. Lorin match, while the winner between the Tender Juicy Giants and the Tanduay Rhum Masters advances against Barangay Ginebra San Mig, 4 seed which took out Alaska on Wednesday.

The Elasto Painters, the No. 2 seeds, advanced with a 96-90 win over Barako Bull also Wednesday night. Top-seeded San Miguel and No. 3 Barangay Ginebra, the defending champion, are both waiting in the semifinals.

Gene Cole in the No. 8 seed after winning up in classification cutthroats with a 6-4 record, just a game behind the Talk 'N Text, Barako Bull and Alaska 7-7 tally crew with reigning MVP Kelly Williams sitting it out after the All-Star break.

Williams has been declared out for the rest of the season with a mysterious blood disease, putting some of the load on a hardy bunch of locals led by Dorian Pinpin and Joseph Sto.

Facebook and Talk 'N Text both carded 7-5 tallies in the classification phase.

Winsett-Palanca paces US Kids golf's Euro tilt

OLIVIO SIDERON PALOMO

Winsett-Palanca carded a two-under par 34 Wednesday to keep the ranks lead in the 2009 US Kids Golf Champion Championships in Biggleswade, Scotland.

Counting his opening round 31 Tuesday, the seven-year-old Filipino had a 66 total, one shots ahead of defending champ Jake Goodrich of Britain.

Goodrich rallied with a 31 for a 66 total, one shot up on Swedish Lee Jensen Palmer Jr., who submitted a 33 and a 68 aggregate.

Palanca, a student of De La Salle-Zobel playing out of Alabang and San Elena golf clubs, finished Nos. 2, 6 and 3 against a lone bogey on No. 7 to ward off his pursuers in the event that drew 33 players from 12 countries.

Palanca also topped last year's qualifier for the Callaway Junior World held at the Manila Southwoods and Sherwood Hills.

TOUR DE CAGAYAN
Valdez upstages son for title

TOUR VETERAN PLACIDO VALDEZ AND son Gerald dominated the rookies from the Cagayan cycling marathon by finishing 1-2 overall recently.

The older Valdez, five-time runner-up in the same debacle Silverflame Team finished the 750-kilometer race from Pasig City to the north, Cagayan, in 13 hours, 57 minutes and 52 seconds, beating his 20-year-old son by a mere three seconds.

Belly Tillamen turned up third in 12:20:17.

The 41-year-old Valdez topped the first stage from Pasig to Tarlac as well as the fifth and final stage from Tuguegarao to Ilo. Also to pocket the P150,000 champion's purse, he also won P50,000 for his road stage victory.

Valdez aided the 179-kilometer final stage in 5:00:00.

Gerald pocketed P75,000 while Tillamen won P50,000. All finishers received P10,000.

"My father and I will continue participating in the races," said Gerald. In Filipino, adding they will use their earnings to renovate their house and purchase new bicycles.

Gerald, who began participating in cycling races in the early 1990s, excelled in the sprint but had to rely on his father's tested tactics to finish runners up in the five-day mini-tour.

"We had a hard time in the last leg because it was windy," he said. "But I was with my father, so I kind of pushed me to do well."

Seventy riders competed in the event organized by the Cagayan Economic Zone Authority (Ceza) in cooperation with the Cycling Organizers Association of the Philippines (Coap).

Benito Lopez, a 30-year-old from Bicutan, Bulacan, who topped the 180 km second leg from Tarlac to Aritao, Nueva Vizcaya, in 3:35:27, earned the Mountain King title.

Michael Gavril, 21, ruled the third stage from Aritao to Santiago City and the fourth leg from Nueva Vizcaya to Santiago City, with times of 1:41:13 and 3:53:31, respectively.

Steve Silva, Contributor

Raging Warriors duel Bombers

THE UNIVERSITY OF THE EAST WARRIORS try to keep its perfect slate as it battles the Jose Rizal U Heavy Bombers today in the PBCOM Flying V Pre-Season MVP Cup at the FilOil Flying V Arena in San Juan.

The Warriors, the only undefeated team in the tournament after La Salle was stripped by San Sebastian, have Nathaniel Amos and Jeffrey Cariaso at their commandos as they tackle the Bombers at 12 noon.

The Stags try to ride on its 73-50 win over the Green Archers as they tackle the Perpetual Help Altas at 2 p.m., before the Far Eastern U Tamaraws take on the Adamson Falcons at 4.

Meanwhile, FilOil Flying V Sports announced its linkup with Filipinas SIFE Champions in Free Enterprise, an outreach program which mobilizes students to help address economic issues in their communities, in promoting the SIFE in the ongoing tournament.

The agreement was entered recently by FPVS chair Mandy Ochoa and Filipinas SIFE country coordinator COO Antonio M. Rebot.

OUTREACH PARTNERSHIP Fernandi, FilOil Flying V president Rolly Villanueva, Mandy Ochoa, Jose P. Lorenzo, Jr. and Filipinas SIFE country coordinator COO Antonio M. Rebot.

chair Jose P. Lorenzo Jr.

Ochoa said the move will attract more schools to join the SIFE program, which will have a national competition on July 16 and 17 at the Ateneo de Manila University.

Cedell P. Tupas

Big Pusay 5-cocker gets going

A BIG SHOW OF GAMEFOWL BREEDERS FROM Mega to Cluster will challenge the Big Pusay 5-cocker derby today at the 3-game elimination stage in Cock Derby at the Pasay City Cockpit.

A guaranteed prize of no less than P500,000 awaits the champion, according to hosts Armed Members of the Philippine Cockers Alliance and Derby Task Organized City.

Class of '88 derby tomorrow

DONATION UNCERTAIN ARE EXPECTED IN the Class of '88 4-Cock derby tomorrow at the San Juan Coliseum with P500,000 up for grabs.

Entries must be submitted today from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m., says Cpl. 1st manager Ronnie Sino.

Meanwhile, Hilarry Pacquiao's MBC-1 "Mang-Ahong 5-Cock Derby" at SJC

SPORTS

A DRIVING Rico Maierhofer of Oracle is fouled by Pharex's Francis Adkins.

Pharex strikes, ties series

By Cedelf F. Tejon

PHAREX DREW ANYTHING ALL-AROUND GAME FROM CHRIS ROSS and got a huge lift from its reserves to fuck out an 83-72 decision over Oracle Residences and level the best-of-five PBL PG Plus Unity Cup finals at one game apiece at the Fun Asia Gym.

On the day he was awarded the Best Player of the Conference, the 6-foot-1 Ross fired 16th-number triple-double, finishing with 15 points, nine rebounds and eight assists to help the lifelong Gemeto back the ejection of big man Rowan Marina.

Don Villarete and Andrea Urbizondo made up for their scoreless outing in Game 1 as they sparked several spurts that allowed the Bulang Gemeto to dip the game apart in the third period.

Urbizondo fired 14 points, including seven straight points to close the second period, while Villarete, who missed the entire semifinal series with Licudis because of suspension, contributed 11 markers and dished out five assists.

"We showed up with a lot of focused energy this time," Pharex coach Carlo Tan said. "The points from Urbizondo and Villarete) were a bonus."

The Bulang Gemeto also double-double outputs from Ian Salvador, who registered with 16 points and grabbed 10 rebounds, and Reymond Aguilar, who had 12 points and 11 rebounds.

Oracle solely missed the services of Mark Barroca, Aldrich Ramos, Mac Hamsad and JR Cawaling who are with the RP Team playing a series of exhibition games in Japan.

Without their third playmaker Barroca, the Titans looked like a ship without a rudder, shooting just 32 percent from the field and only had 11 assists, nine less than the Bulang Gemeto.

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Editor Alexander S. Lhuillier

DID YOU KNOW

Kabayanihan was able to buy a printing press for their newspaper Kalayaan only after two Cagsi natives donated P100 out of the P1,000 they had won as a lottery. The prize was installed in a house in Santa Cruz, Manila.
(SEE EL. ALEJANDRO, Inquirer Research)

Lim lets oil depot stay

Cites economic, social benefits from keeping facility

By Tina G. Santos

MANILA MAYOR ALFREDO LIM yesterday approved controversial Ordinance 7177, which allows the Pandacan oil depot to continue operating in the city.

Lim claimed it was one of the most difficult and painful decisions he has faced since he assumed office, considering the Supreme Court ruling ordering with finality the depot's closing down.

He stressed his decision did not contradict the high tribunal's ruling.

Ordinance 7177 in effect amends Ordinance 8027 under which parts of Sta. Ana and Pandacan were reclassified from industrial to commercial zones, therefore banning the operations of the oil depot.

"In effect, the SC decision did not close an alternative remedy for the city in fact, it even impliedly gave some specific remedies such as repealing or amending the ordinances," Lim explained. "Taking cue from the wordings of the SC, our Sangguniang passed Ordinance 7177."

"No matter how the public perceives my decision, I stand firmly by it. After all, the mark of a true leader is to make the right decision, however unpopular it may be," he added.

Lim made the announcement around noon before City Hall employees and officials, including Vice Mayor Francisco "Isko" Moreno and majority councilors who were proponents of the measure.

Jubilant cheers erupted from a group of pro-oil depot demonstrators as soon as Lim announced his decision.

The demonstrators included residents who claimed that the facility has been beneficial to them, particularly in providing livelihood for their families.

Pressing reasons

Lim cited several "pressing reasons" that led him to approve Ordinance 7177.

He said he took into consideration the adverse effects to the city's economy and social programs if they would ask multinational companies to move out of the city.

"To forego this revenue would mean foregoing basic services that are badly needed," he said. "The city governments use their taxes in providing free education and health care benefits, among others, to residents."

"These are anticipated facts that we should consider and bear more as they are sure to happen than the uncertain fear of speculative terrorist attacks and environmental concerns," the mayor stressed.

Lim said that while special focus is being given on the so-called Big 3 oil players, there are actually a total of 343 huge industries operating in Pandacan and that retiring Ordinance 7177 would displace at least 10,000 workers presently employed in these companies.

He also took note of pronouncements made by the oil companies that once they are forced to relocate, the expenses to be complied will compel them to raise the prices of their products.

Lim also said he considered the safety and security of the people in the area.

Sought for comment, Councilor Ma. Lourdes Isip-Garcia, an adversary of the mayors' reluctance, said they would question the validity of the ordinance before the SC.

MRT 3 rides to go 24 hours starting June 1

By Nico T. Dizon and Jessica Arevalo

METRO MANILA COMMUTERS using the Metro Rail Transit (MRT 3) system will no longer have to join the early morning rush going home starting June 1.

The management of MRT 3 announced yesterday that it is "experimenting" with 24-hour operations in time for the opening of classes on June 1.

MRT 3 general manager Roy Cuddle J. Benroya said the 24-hour operations will be in place seven days a week.

Earlier, the MRT 3 said in a statement that the extended hours are primarily aimed at serving call center agents and other workers in the BPO (business process outsourcing) sector in support of President Macapagal-Arroyo's promise to help the industry.

Metro Manilla commuters who often get stranded during typhoons, including students, are also seen to benefit.

Benroya, who is also assistant secretary in the Department of Transportation and Communications, said that anyways extended hour runs will ensure agents leave their offices at around midnight and at 4 a.m.

"At this period, most buses and jeepneys are in their garages already and most call center agents have to wait long time for the resumption of their operation," Benroya said.

The MRT 3 management said the facilities and trains will be secured by security guards.

Stranded

Meanwhile, some 30,000 passengers of the Light Rail Transit (LRT) were stranded yesterday for two hours when debris from a condominium construction site fell on the train tracks in Manila.

The LRT Authority lost P518,375 in revenues as the disruption of the LRT Line 1 operations coincided with the train system's peak hours from 7:30 a.m. to 9:30 a.m.

LRTA spokesperson Tina Gaston told the Inquirer the management is studying its options in going after the owners of the Malate condominium, along Taft Avenue near Pedro Gil Street in Manila, from where most metal debris and construction debris fell onto the train tracks.

"We did not have problems clearing up the debris. We had to undertake half-line operations because the debris fell on the runaway areas," Gaston said, explaining that the runaway areas supply the electricity which enable the trains to run.

The LRT had to cut off power from its UN Avenue station to Baclaran but continued to operate the Central station to Monumento trains. With a report from Jeannette I. Andrade

A STEEL-REINFORCED mesh wire is on the LRT tracks along Taft Avenue between Quirino and Pedro Gil stations in Manila. The debris, which caused a two-hour disruption in train service, fell from a condominium under construction (right photo) near the LRT tracks. INQUIRER PHOTOS

Ex-solgen files estafa raps vs village officials

FORMER SOLICITOR GENERAL Frank Chavez has filed estafa charges against 11 officials of the Alabang Village Association (AAVA) for allegedly misappropriating for themselves his association bond worth P512,000.

In a statement sent to the Inquirer, Chavez said named respondents before the City Prosecutor's Office in Muntinlupa were Apolinario de Los Santos III, Rogelio Santos, Shannon Macua Jr., Miguel Victoria, Pedro Perondi, Mercedes Arisaldo, Godofredo Victor Juliano, Federico Santos III, Roberto Limcaoco, Leandro de Leon and Cynthia Arceo.

Chavez swore in his complaint that despite AAVA's letter in October 1999 that he has a refundable amount of P177,000 on his construction bond, respondents refused to issue his clearance and instead uncovered a no-dues case.

Despite repeated demands these past 10 years, Chavez said respondents refused to release the bond, adding it was only in 2008 when respondents justified their refusal to release the bond on the basis of the alleged violation of the Deed of Restrictions.

Chavez said AAVA never informed him in writing that his bond has been forfeited because of alleged deed violations as AdVAn once letter of October 1999 did not impose any fine or penalty for any violations.

Chavez's house was constructed 13 years ago.

Cite Ermita for contempt, Sandigan asked

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

THE LAWYER REPRESENTING the families behind the complaint that led to the suspension of Rodrigues Mayor Pedro Cure po has asked the Sandiganbayan to order Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita to explain why he should not be cited for contempt.

Ermita had issued last month a memorandum ordering the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG) to postpone the implementation of the suspension order the Sandiganbayan had issued against Cuerpo.

Lawyer Ernesto Francisco Jr. said, "It is quite undesirable that the issuance of Executive Secretary Ermita, which pertained to his directive to the DILG Secretary to hold in abeyance the implementation of the order of imposition of accessed Cuerpo, are contemptuous, being sensitive of unlawful interference with the to-be-issued judicial proceedings."

Cuerpo faces charges of grave abuse of authority and grave misconduct for allegedly illegally awarding the twice being built by some 92 families on a property in Barangay Burgos in 2002.

The Sandiganbayan ordered his suspension on Oct. 3, 2008 and junked his motion for reconsideration on March 17. But Cuerpo again filed a second motion for reconsideration on April 8 and refused to honor the suspension order that the DILG served him the order on April 15.

But earlier this month, Ermita directed DILG Secretary Ronaldo Puno to "hold in abeyance" its suspension order.

In an earlier interview with the Inquirer, Francisco said: "Malacanang has no business ordering the DILG not to implement the order being issued by the Sandiganbayan."

Cuerpo cited the statement when he asked the court three weeks ago to disqualify Prosecutor Sorin the proceedings.

But Francisco said that "if ever there is anyone who should be made to show cause, it should not be cited for contempt ... It should be [Executive Secretary Ermita] ... for undue interference with a lawful Order of the Honorable Court."

Death came after a wake

A TEENAGER WAS SHOT DEAD on Wednesday night minutes after attending a wake in Sta. Cruz, Manila.

Police said Jessie Sara, 17, was shot after crossing the corner of Arevalo Road and Pampanga Street at around 11:30 p.m.

Police said Sara and two friends had just come from a wake and decided to eat at a restaurant on Pampanga Street.

As they were crossing the street, a Mitsubishi Adventure passenger jeepney suddenly stopped in front of them and the driver pulled out a compact gun (improvised shotgun) and shot Sara.

He was rushed to the Jacobo General Hospital where the doctors declared him dead. Cases of shotgun wounds in the body. Jeannette I. Andrade

Meralco offices pass ISO standards

Eleven organizations from across the three Meralco corporate groups of Networks, Customer Retail and Shared Services confirm the company's strict adherence to quality management systems by earning successive ISO certifications.

These certifications confirm that the organizations have successfully undergone an independent audit and have been found to be in conformance with ISO requirements in the different registration levels.

Organizations that receive ISO certifications are those that appropriately apply the business processes formalized and recognized worldwide.

In Meralco, certified under ISO 9001 are seven organizations, namely: (a) Sub-Transmission Services covering Substation, Sub-transmission Lines, Power System Protection, Testing and SCADA; (b) System Control Center; (c) Metering Services covering Metering Services Asset Management, Distribution Metering Security and Secure Metering Services; (d) Distribution Services covering Stations, System Analysis, Design and Logistics; (e) Call Center; (f) HRD Training and Development Administration; and (g) Corporate Information and Technology which covers Information Systems, Information Technology, ICT-M and Telecommunications.

One organization, meanwhile, received the ISO 14001 and OHSAS 18001. This is the South Distribution Services and co-located offices within the South Sector components.

Three Meralco laboratories also were accredited under ISO/IEC 17025:2005. They are Corporate Meter Maintenance, Testing-Calibration and Repair; and Testing-Mechanical.

The certifications of these organizations cover different periods since 2002. Some are ISO registered until 2011.

REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
REGIONAL TRIAL COURT
FOURTH JUDICIAL REGION
(Ft. Tomas, Batangas)

Land Reg. Case No. 2008-2-07 LRA Record No. N-59146

NOTICE OF INITIAL HEARING

To the Hon. Solicitor General, Office of the Solicitor General, 134 Amorsolo St., Legaspi Village, Makati City; The Hon. City Prosecutor, City Prosecutor's Office, Batangas City; The Hon. Provincial Prosecutor, Provincial Prosecutor's Office, Batangas City; The Hon. Municipal Mayor, Municipal Building, Lipa City; The Hon. Municipal Treasurer, Municipal Treasurer's Office, Lipa City; The Hon. Municipal Assessor, Municipal Assessor's Office, Lipa City; The Hon. Municipal Engineer, Municipal Engineer's Office, Lipa City; The Hon. Municipal Planning and Development Coordinator, Municipal Planning and Development Coordinator's Office, Lipa City; The Hon. Municipal Environment and Natural Resources Officer, Municipal Environment and Natural Resources Office, Lipa City; The Hon. Provincial Environment and Natural Resources Officer, Provincial Environment and Natural Resources Office, Batangas City; The Hon. Regional Executive Director, Department of Public Works and Highways, Regional Office, Port Area, Manila; The Hon. Director, Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources, PCA Bldg., Elliptical Road, Diliman, Quezon City; The Hon. Director, Forest Management Bureau, Visayas Avenue, Diliman, Quezon City; Metro Manila; The Provincial Governor, The Provincial Treasurer, The Provincial Assessor, The Provincial Engineer, The Provincial Planning and Development Coordinator, The Provincial Environment and Natural Resources Officer, Provincial Capitol, Batangas City; The Regional Director, Land Management Bureau, 2nd Floor, Old Bachelor's Bldg., Visayas Avenue, Diliman, Quezon City; The Municipal Mayor, The Municipal Treasurer, The Municipal Assessor, The Municipal Engineer, The Municipal Planning and Development Coordinator, The Municipal Environment and Natural Resources Officer, Municipal Building, Lipa City; The Hon. Director, Land Management Bureau, 2nd Floor, Old Bachelor's Bldg., Visayas Avenue, Diliman, Quezon City; Metro Manila; The Hon. Director, Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources, PCA Bldg., Elliptical Road, Diliman, Quezon City; Metro Manila; The Provincial Governor, The Provincial Treasurer, The Provincial Assessor, The Provincial Engineer, The Provincial Planning and Development Coordinator, The Provincial Environment and Natural Resources Officer, Provincial Capitol, Batangas City; The Regional Director, Land Management Bureau, 2nd Floor, Old Bachelor's Bldg., Visayas Avenue

Recession leading to repression, Amnesty says

LONDON—THE GLOBAL financial crisis is leading governments around the world to crack down on people protesting against rising poverty and unemployment, Amnesty International said on Thursday.

While world attention has been fixed on the collapse of big financial services firms, those at the very bottom of the economic pyramid are suffering the worst, Amnesty's Secretary General Irene Khan said in an interview.

"There is a kind of drumbeat ... here, and those are the most vulnerable end of the chain are feeling the brunt," Khan said, she added that the interest focus on fixing the world's troubled financial system was undermining draconian direct inequality, insecurity and repression.

"It is harder, much harder to talk about rights in hard times when big Wall Street banks are crashing," Khan said.

Amnesty's annual roundup of human rights abuses across the world focused on the impact of the economic downturn in countries like Ghana, where millions of migrant workers drawn from its vast economic have been thrown out of work by the collapse in exports. Authorities have maintained their right grip on the country's media and continue to focus on suppression through to challenge government policies, the group said.

In Latin countries, Amnesty said the "already critical" situation of many indigenous groups risks being exacerbated by the crisis.

And in Africa, Amnesty said the rising cost of living had sparked protests across the continent—only to be met by violent repression.

Mali, Cameroon, Tunisia, Somalia, Zimbabwe and South Africa were singled out as African countries where worsening economic circumstances had led to unrest or attacks on human rights.

Khan said the impact of the crisis was "playing out in different ways in different countries."

Policy makers in the United States, she said, were being distracted from dealing with global human rights issues by their focus on salvaging the country's own economy. But she noted that the world human rights community still had high hopes for President Barack Obama's administration, and the argued the US president to put human rights high on his agenda.

"Crises create opportunity," Khan said, arguing that forgetting human rights in the name of the economy would be a mistake. He to restore the downturn would leave any future recovery incomplete.

"Ignoring can exist for the sake of the other will solve another," she said. AP

WorldBriefs

3 cruise ship crew catch swine flu off Australia

CANBERRA, Australia—A cruise ship with 2,000 passengers aboard has not short a voyage and will head to an Australian port by medical help after three crew members were diagnosed on Thursday with swine flu, a health official said. Health Minister Nicola Roxon also announced that Australia had written enough vaccine for vaccination for 10 million people—almost half Australia's population. That comes as the number of swine flu cases in the country jumped from 67 on Wednesday to 100 by mid-Thursday. Elsewhere in Asia, Singapore confirmed its first summer's infection on Wednesday; a 23-year-old woman who reported symptoms after visiting New York. South Korea confirmed four more cases of the disease, bringing the total there to 32. The virus has sickened more than 15,000 people in 48 countries and been linked to more than 100 deaths worldwide with the majority of the fatalities in Mexico. AP

Pakistan Taliban claim Lahore attack

ISLAMABAD, Pakistan—Pakistani Taliban claimed responsibility on Thursday for a suicide gun and bomb attack in the city of Lahore the previous day that killed 24 people and wounded nearly 300. The government said the attack or a high security area where police headquarters, a counter-terrorism police unit and military intelligence office are located, was revenge for an offensive against the Taliban in the Swat valley, said Shahid Orakzai said. The Army moved against the militants in the Swat region last year month after the Taliban had seized a district only 100 km from the capital and a peace pact collapsed.

Reuters

Chances of El Niño rising with warming Pacific

SYDNEY—The chances of a 2009 El Niño, a warming of western Pacific waters that often brings drought to Australia's far islands, has risen and is above a 50 percent probability, the Australian Bureau of Meteorology said on Thursday. International climate models are now predicting a warming of the Pacific Ocean, "said the bureau. "The average of the forecasts from each of these five models predict El Niño conditions being established by the southern spring, and by mid-winter to four of five." said the bureau in its latest report. "With this higher predictability and based on observations to date towards, the probability of the development of an El Niño event in 2009 is more much higher than one month ago and it is significantly higher than the climatological probability of about 25 percent."

Reuters

Quake of 7.1 magnitude strikes Honduras

MANAGUA—A powerful 7.1 magnitude earthquake struck just off the northern coast of Honduras on Thursday, according to forecasts sent for Base Central American countries, the US Geological Survey said. The earthquake struck 100 kilometers north of the coastal town of La Ceiba, the USGS said. There were no immediate reports of casualties. AP

Old lotto ticket nets millions

SYDNEY—AN AUSTRALIAN woman who checked a bunch of old lottery tickets because she was worried about her family's finances found she had won more than $10 million 10 months ago, officials said on Thursday.

The university student in her 30s won 13,185,273 Australian dollars after checking the 10-month-old ticket she'd received as a gift from her father—two months before it would have expired.

"I woke up this morning worried about our finances," the woman told Lotterywest, the official state lottery for Western Australia.

"Something made me think to check the tickets and I thought that if I was something then I could help mum and dad out."

The winning ticket, entered in a 50-million-dollar On Lotto jackpot draw on July 22, 2008, cost 0.70 dollars. AFP

Republic of the Philippines
MANILA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT AUTHORITY
MIA Administration Building, NAIA Road, Pasay City, Metro Manila

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Manila International Airport Authority, through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), invites interested parties to apply for eligibility and to bid for the following contract:

Name of Contract	Proposed Terminal 3 Expansion Project (Phase 1) Airside Facilities and Apron Development Package 1
Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC)	Php 4,400,000,000
Contract Duration (Calendar)	Three Hundred Twenty (320) calendar days from the date of receipt of Notice to Proceed

Prospective contractors should possess a valid PCAB License, Accreditation Level (AAA, AA, A, B, C, D, or Trade and Industrial) and Category (Large, Medium, or Small) corresponding to the ABC. Prospective contractors may obtain further information from the BAC Secretariat, Ground Floor, MIA Administration Building, NAIA Complex, Pasay City, Metro Manila, Tel. No. 879-1000 loc. 5201 to 5209.

Bidding documents shall be issued to all prospective contractors that have been found eligible and have paid a non-refundable fee for the Bidding Documents in the amount of Php 4,400,000 on June 01, 2009. Bidding documents shall be issued to prospective contractors found eligible after evaluation of a "Satisfied" status only. All duly qualified bidders will be allowed to purchase the Bidding Documents upon payment of a non-refundable fee of Php 10,000.00. The deadline for the submission of bids is on June 22, 2009 from 8:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m.

Prospective Bidders shall be governed with Philippine Government Electronic Procurement System (PhilGEPS) and the Government Service Insurance System's Project Procurement Management.

All participants coming in eligibility clearance shall be required by the Security Clearance Security, Safety and Environment Office (SSEO) of the MIAA Police Department (MIAPD) to undergo security clearance. Participants shall be required to present a valid ID issued by their employer/company/agency or by the personal government ID of R.A. 9208 and Immigration Rules and Regulations.

Other schedule of activities are as follows:

1. Pre-Bid Conference	June 10, 2009
2. Submission & Receipt of Bids	June 22, 2009

The MIAA reserves the right to reject any or all eligibility documents or proposals without affecting any liability, reserve any defect or formalities contained therein, accept any proposal which is advantageous to the government and to waive any formality in the conduct of the bidding process as contained in the bidding documents. Therefore further reserves its obligation to compensate in whatever way for any expenses incurred in the preparation of their bids.

JOSE SALAZAR
Chief, Bids and Awards Committee

Bidding ID 2009

Sotomayor: Two sides start plotting confirmation strategies

WASHINGTON—THE WHITE House moved aggressively on Wednesday to begin selling the nominee and the public on President Barack Obama's choice of Judge Sonia Sotomayor for the Supreme Court, as the battle lines surrounding her confirmation hearings began to harden just days.

One day after Obama introduced her to the nation, Sotomayor was at the White House, plotting strategy with Obama's aides and maintaining a round of calls to senators.

The administration convened legal experts on a conference call to make the case for Sotomayor's confirmation, and to select nominees from conservatives, who are trying to paint her as a judicial activist who would impose her personal political agenda on the law.

Top aides to Obama have resolved that there is no White House "war room" to mount a campaign for Sotomayor's confirmation. But the call was already the first in a series of coordinated moves to raise the debate on Obama's terms.

"We're going to be vigilant," said David Axelrod, Obama's senior adviser, "because you don't want anyone distorting the facts."

Sotomayor's fans and supporters took to the airwaves and the Internet. The Judicial Confirmation Network, a conservative group, began running an Internet advertisement attacking Sotomayor, while a coalition of liberal advocacy groups, the Coalition for Constitutional Values, announced that it had purchased a 30-second advertisement supporting her.

Newt Gingrich, the former Republican speaker of the House, seized on a statement made in a 2001 speech by Sotomayor, who would be the first Hispanic justice on the Supreme Court, to assert on his blog that she was a racist and should withdraw.

In the speech, Sotomayor questioned an oft-quoted notion that a wise old man and a wise old woman would reach the same conclusion in deciding cases. "I would hope that a wise Latina woman with the richness of her experience would come often. Ours not reach a better conclusion than a white male who hasn't lived that life," she said.

SUPREME Court nominee Judge Sonia Sotomayor visits President Barack Obama on May 26 in the East Room Ceremony of the White House in Washington. The battle is set between conservative and liberal interest groups to weigh in on the fate of the woman who would be the Supreme Court's first Hispanic.

Gingrich said on his blog that such a statement would be considered to mean if it came from a white man.

But the argument did not seem to resonate with members of the Senate Judiciary Committee. Sen. Orrin Hatch, R-Utah, extolled the comment in an interview with CNN: "Yes, I don't agree with that," Hatch said, "and frankly, I think it's a big mistake." Graham said, because the home's land as chance to explain some of those comments than she's made." AFP

Sri Lanka avoids war crimes probe

COLOMBO—SRI LANKA WAS on Thursday celebrating a major diplomatic victory over Western nations determined to investigate alleged war crimes committed during an offensive against the Tamil Tigers.

A little more than a week after government troops defeated the separatist rebels, the island's diplomats managed to lobby some support and commissioned a special session of the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva.

The Council session, called because of alarm over the high number of civilian casualties as well as the island's treatment of displaced Tamil civilians, ended late Wednesday with a resolution praising the outcome of the war.

"This is a strong endorsement of our principled efforts to end terrorism, and the successful handling of the world's biggest hostage crisis," Sri Lanka's Human Rights Minister Mahinda Samarasinghe said.

"This is a clear message that the international community is behind Sri Lanka," he added.

Although the Tamil Tigers were accused of holding tens of thousands of Tamil civilians as human shields, government troops were alleged to have soldiered embedded units packed with civilians in between indiscriminate shelling.

The UN estimates that more than 7,000 civilians were killed in the first four months of this year alone.

US human rights chief Nisri Pillay had told the Council that there were credible evidence both Sri Lankan forces and the rebels, all Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) grossly violated international humanitarian laws. AFP

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The WORLD

Editor Lorenzo B. Ocampo

Catholic clergy abuse report no surprise—Irish president

DUBLIN, IRELAND (AFP)—President said on Thursday a harrowing report into how Catholic priests and nuns had abused children had not come as a shock after her own convent school experiences.

"I had a fair idea it was happening," Mary McAleese said in an interview.

"I was educated by Mercy nuns, my brothers were in Christian Brothers schools. Some of the stories that come through the Ryan Report would not be unfamiliar to us."

Revelations of flogging, sexual abuse and rape in Ireland's once-dictatorial system of industrial and reform schools have drained Irish people, particularly older generations who did not confront the widespread abuse.

The report, chaired by High Court Justice Sean Ryan, criticized the Department of Education for colluding in the silence surrounding the abuse and noted children were also preyed upon by foster parents, religious or workers and employees.

"I had always known that convent, that ethic, that dominance, that orthodoxy, allied intrinsically to a culture of corporal punishment and a culture of abusive corporal punishment," said McAleese.

The Archbishop of Dublin, Dermod Martin, said this week that information about the abuse had been amassed for decades.

McAleese, a former professor of law, said abusers should be prosecuted as a result of the report.

"As far as those are people still alive who are responsible for these criminal acts then there is pain and hatred of what comes out of the Ryan report it not should be that they are brought before the proper authorities."

The inquiry did not name abusers after a successful legal challenge by the Christian Brothers, which had been the largest provider of residential care for boys in Ireland.

A spate of scandals involving sex predator priests has dislodged the Catholic Church from its once preeminent position in Irish society but there is anger that many have avoided jail.

Religious orders named in the report have come under pressure to pay more compensation to victims. A 2002 deal capped their contribution to a redress fund at 127 million euros ($177 million). The total bill is expected to top 1 billion euros.

In the United States, the Roman Catholic archdiocese of Los Angeles agreed to pay $660 million to 508 victims in the largest compensation of its kind. Reuters

US, S. Korea raise alert after threat from North

SEOUL—SOUTH KOREA AND the United States raised the military alert level for the peninsula on Thursday after the communist North warned the truce ending the Korean War was dead and it was ready to attack.

North Korea ramped up tensions this week with a series of provocations rarely seen since the 1950-53 Korean War, including war threats, missile launches and a nuclear test that puts it closer to having an atomic bomb.

The joint command for the 28,500 US troops that support South Korea's 670,000 soldiers has raised its alert a notch to signify a serious threat from North Korea, the South's Joint Chiefs of Staff said.

It is the highest threat level since the North's only other nuclear test in October 2006.

North Korea looks certain to face fresh sanctions for defying a UN resolution by expelling a nuclear doctor for a second time, Western diplomats said, with a vote in the 15-nation Security Council expected next week.

North Korea could be set for further punishments that include additional ships-range missile tests off its west coast, the South's Yonhap news agency cited Wednesday night quoted an unnamed government source as saying.

A NORTH Korean soldier stroke opposite the Chinese border city of Dandong on May 26. AFP/FILE

Analysts said the North's rulers—ailing leader Kim Jong-il's grip on power and helping him chew up succession plans in Asia's only communist dynasty after a suspected stroke in August raised questions over his rule.

Telegram reports point out that while North Korea is pushing hard to develop a nuclear arsenal, it does not have an effective way to attach with an atomic warhead or bomb.

Security Council powers have agreed in principle that North Korea must face sanctions, Western diplomats said on Wednesday.

Possible steps include a ban on inspecting and exporting all arms and not just heavy weapons, asset freezes and travel bans for North Korean officials, and placing more items on a UN blacklist.

The measures would expand on sanctions approved by the council after Pyongyang's 2006 nuclear test, penalties that have been widely ignored and left unenforced.

The diplomats said cargo inspections were also possible, although China, worried about instability in its neighbor and the chance Pyongyang can claim as a major ally, is reluctant.

US officials have urged China to pressure North Korea to step back from nuclear brinkmanship and return to stalled disarmament talks. But many Chinese analysts say Washington overstates Beijing's sway over Pyongyang, as well as their government's willingness to use that influence.

"Undoubtedly, China also wants a swift and united response, but it probably won't give the United States all it wants. China has its own worries," said Shi Yinhong, an expert on regional security at Renmin University in Beijing. Reuters

Malaysians who call wives ugly could face jail

KUALA LUMPUR, MALAYSIA—IT soon could be a crime for Malaysian men to call their wives ugly, a women's rights group and a news report said on Thursday.

The Sisters in Islam Women's Development group said it was considering a petition to ban "emotional violence" against women, who currently have legal protection against physical assault only. The Star newspaper reported.

Women's groups told the department that husbands who "threaten or use a pattern of cunning mental and psychological damage" should face counseling, fines and jail terms, Ivy Josiah, director of the Women's Aid Organization, told The Associated Press.

Offenders include a husband who "tells his wife she is ugly or his relatives love and like her/is emotionally possessed," the government department's head, Noraini Alwi, told The Star newspaper reported.

Noraini Alwi said there was a need to criminalize emotional abuse because it could deeply scar a woman's dignity and self-confidence, the report said.

There were no immediate details about when Parliament would discuss the plan.

About 90 percent of some 800 women who called the Women's Aid Organization for help last year reported being psychologically abused, though some were also physically assaulted, Josiah said. AP

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BUSINESS

BSP cuts interest rates to 17-year low

Boosting economy through increased lending

By Michelle V. Ramos

SAYING THE ECONOMY NEEDED MORE STIMULATION following a disappointing growth performance in the first quarter, the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) yesterday slashed by another 25 basis points its key policy rates with the hope of injecting more liquidity into the system.

The bruising cut brought the BSP's overnight borrowing and lending rates to 4.25 percent and 6.25 percent—the lowest in 17 years. The latest move to ease monetary policy placed the total reduction since December to 175 basis points. (One percentage point is equivalent to 100 basis points.)

[The Monetary] Board observed that while there are encouraging signs that the global downturn may be bottoming out, it is too early to conclude that global economic conditions are clearly moving toward normality," BSP Governor Amando de Dios said.

"There are still large imbalances in the global financial markets which could prolong the adjustment process," de Dios added.

A cut in the central bank's overnight lending rate is intended to encourage banks to lend more of their funds instead of keeping these as deposits with the BSP. Monetary authorities said sustaining growth in bank lending, which supports investment activities, was necessary to address the economic slowdown.

The reduction in the BSP's overnight lending rate, which influences interest rates charged by banks, is aimed at encouraging more borrowing by businesses and consumers.

BSP Deputy Governor Diwa Guinigundo said that as of last week, banks' loan rate for the average lending rate by 67 basis points since the central bank started lowering its policy rates in December. Average bank lending rate, covering all tenors, stood at 8.758 percent as of May 15, down from 9.232 percent in December.

Guinigundo said the BSP would have wanted banks to lower their interest rates more, but there had been a tightening of credit standards because of the uncertain economic environment. Banks were being more careful in lending, not wanting to be exposed to risks of defaults amid restrained income levels.

The economy, weighed down by the slump in exports, the anemic global demand, grew by only 0.4 percent in the first quarter from a year ago. This was the country's worst performance in 10 years, the National Statistical Coordination Board said. (See story on Page A1.)

Monetary officials said rates cut by the BSP alone would not be enough to arrest the economic downturn. They said the government needed to maximize its P1.4-trillion budget for the year to avoid a recession.

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Banco de Oro buys GE Money Bank

By Dave C. Batinlan

RETAIL TYCOON HENRY SY'S Banco De Oro Unibank (BDO) is acquiring the local banking unit of American conglomerate General Electric Co. (GE), cementing its lead as the country's biggest financial institution.

The bank disclosed to the Philippine Stock Exchange (PSE) yesterday that it had signed a definitive agreement to purchase GE Money Bank for an undisclosed amount. GE, in turn, will acquire a minority stake in BDO equivalent to about 1.5 percent with an option to increase this to 10 percent.

"It's a unit and share subscription transaction since seller and buyer are different entities within the GE group," BDO president Nestor Tan explained.

"We are very pleased to be working with GE and look forward to exploring opportunities for future collaboration."

The sale of GE Money Bank and the entry of GE as a minority stockholder in BDO are subject to closing conditions, including regulatory approvals, and are expected to be completed within the third quarter of 2009.

The deal appears similar to that launched by BDO with United Overseas Bank of Singapore, when BDO took over its Philippine operations in 2005. The new acquisition, BDO's first since taking over the former Equitable-PCI Bank in 2006, will expand the local banking giant's 900 billion-peso loan base by another P70 billion.

"We welcome the opportunity to be partners with an institution like GE. With GE's expertise in the financial sector, we hope this partnership will ultimately provide our customers with better consumer products and flexible financing solutions," BDO chair Teresita Sy-Coson said.

The consolidation of GE Money Bank's business into BDO, including its 20,000 customers, 350 employees and network of 35 branch licenses and 30 ATMs nationwide, is seen enabling BDO to accelerate the growth of its consumer banking business. As of end-March, GE Money had a loan portfolio of P6.08 billion and a deposit base

BANCO DE ORO/ B2

Megaworld raises ₱5.1B from rights offering

By Doris C. Dumlao

PROPERTY FIRM Megaworld Corp. has raised ₱5.1 billion to support its capital spending from the sale of new common shares to existing stockholders.

The company disclosed to the Philippine Stock Exchange (PSE) that its offer of 5.1 billion shares at ₱1 each were fully subscribed. Eligible shareholders were allowed to buy one new share for every four shares already owned.

In its disclosure, Megaworld said it was able to claim ₱5.2 billion from the first round of rights offering, while another ₱1.9 billion was taken up by parent company Alliance Global Group, through RGO Capital and Investments Corp.

This stock rights offering is part of a ₱53.4 billion fund-raising planned by Megaworld to roll out a ₱50-billion capital spending program for the next three years. The property company is upbeat on the middle-income residential and business projects surrounding office towers.

Megaworld jump-started its fund-raising last February with the sale of ₱1.4 billion worth of seven-year corporate notes to selected institutional investors.

The plan is to generate a total of ₱9 billion within the next three years from the offering of preemptive rights with detachable warrants to existing holders of common shares, while the rest of the ₱30-billion, medium-term capital spending program will be covered by internally generated funds.

A detachable warrant gives the holder the right to purchase an underlying security at a specific price. Megaworld's warrants and underlying shares shall be listed on the PSE.

The company is primarily engaged in the development in Metro Manila of large-scale, mixed-use central business districts, or centers-of-a-township, that integrate residential, commercial, educational, leisure and entertainment components. Its six major township projects are the 17-hectare Eastwood City in Quezon City; the five-hectare Forbes Town Center and the 56-hectare McKinley Hill township in Taguig City; the 25-hectare resort-like-themed Newport City in Pasay, the five-hectare Mandarin Garden City in Cebu; and the 23-storey twin towers Cinnabon in Dumaguete, Manila

Funding part of 3-year capex program

Compulsory board meetings

BY TRADITION AND FOR PRACTICAL considerations, most corporations hold the first meeting of their newly elected directors immediately after the annual stockholders' meeting.

What better time to convene the organizational meeting than when the obligatory yearly ritual has just been completed and the rest of the stockholders are in a good mood, especially if business was good the previous year.

During the board meeting, the directors elect the key officers of the company and discuss its major policy directions.

After getting through this process, it's back to the salt mines, so to speak, for management and the rest of the company's personnel.

In the meantime, the directors who are not directly involved in running the company simply sit back, relax and wait for the next board meeting.

The wait will not be long if management follows strictly the company's bylaws on the date, time and preparation of the agenda of board meetings.

The directors can look forward to receiving, ahead of time, the notice and agenda, together with the supporting documents for the issues that will be taken up at the meeting.

That's the ideal situation. Unfortunately, not all corporations faithfully adhere to their by-laws on this matter.

Board meetings

The issue of how often the board of directors should meet was the subject of a query before the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC).

The by-laws of the concerned corporation provide that "regular meetings of the Board of Directors may be held monthly on the second Thursday of each month at 2:00 p.m. in the office of the Corporation or at another place ... as may be designated in the notice and at such other times as the President of the corporation may determine."

The details about the date, time and place of such meetings are clearly spelled out. But, noticeably, the word used to describe the holding of regular meetings is "may," not "shall" which is the common practice.

From the latter wording, notice for regular meetings need not be given as necessary because the time and place of its holding are already specified.

For meetings other than regular, the determination of whether or not they should be called, and the date, time and place of their conduct, have been left to the discretion of the company president.

Apparently the company's board did not hold regular meetings; it met only when there were urgent matters to be discussed.

That arrangement did not sit well with a director who, aside from questioning the validity of the procedure, wanted to know the remedy available to him to compel the corporate secretary or the board to conduct regular meetings.

Interpretation

The resolution of the issue revolves around the interpretation of the word "may" which the corporation cites as justification for its directors' meeting only when there are urgent matters to be discussed.

So, if such matters do not exist, the company thinks the directors need not meet for the entire year or month.

The SEC conceded that "the word 'may' is permissive only and operates to confer discretion, stated otherwise, it is not mandatory."

Nonetheless, it cannot close down are instances where the word "may" is construed as "shall" to give effect to the intention of the legislature.

The law applicable to the instant case is Sec. 53 of the Corporation Code, which states that "regular meetings of the board of directors or trustees of every corporation shall be held monthly unless the by-laws provide otherwise."

It further provides that "special meetings of the board of directors or trustees may be held at any time upon the call of the president or as provided in the by-laws."

The SEC explained that the use of the word "shall" in the cited provision of law indicates an imperative obligation. The board is mandated to hold a regular meeting on the date and time specified in the by-laws.

Mandatory

Insisting in on the by-laws provision subject of the query, the SEC stated that "the word 'may' as used in the by-laws shall be construed in a way that is consistent with the provisions of the Corporation Code."

Hence, it is the duty of the board of directors of the corporation to hold a regular meeting every month as mandated in its by-laws.

In the absence of notice to the contrary, a regular meeting of the board of directors is deemed scheduled monthly despite the use of the word "may" in the pertinent provision of the by-laws.

On the question of the remedy available to a director in case the regular monthly meeting is not held, the SEC said that he may file an action in court to compel the corporation to conduct that monthly activity.

Since the dispute is between the corporation and a stockholder who also happens to be a director, the SEC pointed out that the problem partakes the nature of an intracorporate controversy that, under existing laws, should be resolved by the regular courts and not the SEC.

MPIC eyes bigger Skyway stake

METRO PACIFIC INVESTMENT CORP. (MPIC) is in talks with the Gotianun group of companies, the controlling stock holder of the company operating the Skyway, to raise its stake to the elevated toll road project to 30 percent from the existing 9 percent.

MPIC, the local infrastructure unit of the Hong Kong-based First Pacific, is also considering to invest about P2 billion in a 100-hectare township development where in Bulacan and is now in talks with the local government unit for the project, company president Jose Ma. Luis told reporters after the company's stockholders' meeting yesterday.

"MPIC is continuing an opportunity to be involved in 20-year government contracts to design, construct and maintain a 100-hectare sanitary landfill for Metro Manila's 7,000 metric tons of daily waste," Luis said.

During the company's stockholders' meeting yesterday, shareholders approved an increase in the company's authorized capital stock to P31.35 billion from about P21 billion to accommodate future fund-raising for expansion activities as well as boost stock trading liquidity.

MPIC chair Manuel V. Pangilinan said the company would raise capital through the sale of primary or secondary shares by August or September this year from the 10-billion public float to about 25 percent of total issued shares. Only 2.7 percent of its stock is in public hands.

Since subscribing into an infrastructure company with interests in toll roads, water distribution and hospital operations here years ago, Pangilinan said the company had grown to size by about nine times.

As of end-2008, total assets amounted to P93.1 billion compared to P12.16 billion a year ago. "This reinvention of your company simply recognizes the benefits of investing in a new platform, which would provide a stable earnings and cash flow base," Pangilinan said.

He said the company would likely end this year with user profit higher than earlier expected. MPIC earlier gave a guidance on 2009 core net income at ₱1.2 billion against ₱947 million last year.

The company has budgeted about ₱57 billion this year to expand its infrastructure businesses, including an increase in its stake in Cleo Metro Manila Skyway Corp., which is building a seven-kilometer toll road connecting Bicutan to Alabang, the second phase of the Skyway project. A syndicate of five banks earlier agreed to provide a ₱14-billion loan facility to the company to expand its elevated toll road from Bicutan to Alabang and refinance old debt. *Doris C. Dumlao*

Banco de Oro buys ... From page B1

of ₱96.98 billion.

GE, for its part, will bring in considerable value to BDO in the form of marketing, risk management and operational expertise, the PSE disclosure said.

"BDO's superior market presence and clear strategy for growth will provide the business with the best opportunities for success. In addition, key customers and depositors will benefit from the fact that both banks have in office with greater convenience and a wider range of products and services than ever before," said Mark Arnold, GE Capital chief executive officer for Southeast Asia banking.

Asked by the bourse whether BDO will also join an upcoming bidding for a controlling stake in medium-sized Philippine Bank of Communications, the said they had "no plans to participate."

Stocks... From page B4

would cut key rates even further in their meeting later yesterday.

"The latest data suggested economic growth may push the central bank to cut the rates," he said.

"The market is moving sideways because of the economic growth figures," said Bonnie Poonsiri of Wealth Global Equities Inc.

"The market is also taking its cue from the sentiment of the US market," he added. *AFP*

Meralco backs House bill to lower electricity costs

Cheaper medicines on the way

By Amy R. Remo

PRICES OF PHARMACEUTICAL products in the country, seen to be relatively high compared to that of its neighbors, should go down when standards and regulations governing products in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations region are harmonized.

According to Bureau of Food and Drugs director Leticia Bartolome-Gutierrez, since the harmonized standards and regulations are in place, consumers could enjoy lower-priced medicines.

Members of the Asean Consultative Committee for Standards and Quality-Pharmaceutical Product Working Group (ACCSQ-PPWG) are currently here in the country to formulate a regulatory scheme among Asean member countries.

The scheme aims to remove trade barriers, as embodied in the Asean Free Trade Area, by coming up with standardized regulatory requirements and doing away with duplicative studies to meet such requirements.

With harmonized standards in place, ACCSQ-PPWG co-chair Yuppadee Jiamwangpa said rates associated with importing pharmaceutical products would be reduced.

"Consumers will have more choices," she said. "Products from (each of the Asean) countries will reach consumers faster ... more easily."

Abigail L. Ho

Uniform tax in lieu of all other gov't fees eyed

MANILA ELECTRIC CO.'s (Meralco) power overall average price of electricity in its franchise area to drop by more than 14 centavos per kilowatt-hour, should Congress pass House Bill No. 6208, which would impose a uniform franchise tax on distribution utilities.

In a letter to Donald T. Kanapeng of the committee on ways and means, Meralco said it would fully support the bill since it would ultimately benefit the consumers.

Jessica dela Peña, Meralco vice president and head of utility economics, explained that the "imposition of a 3-percent uniform franchise tax in lieu of all other taxes would ease the tax burden on the service, reduce the cost of providing electric service, and bring down power prices to electricity consumers."

Currently, electricity distribution utilities like Meralco pay corporate income tax, local franchise tax, value-added tax, as well as other taxes and fees such as real property taxes, import taxes, documentary stamp taxes, regulatory fees, and others.

"This will translate to corresponding reductions in electricity prices to end-users, both household and business establishments, providing welcome relief during this time of economic uncertainty," Dela Peña said.

Household consumers, she said, will stand to benefit the most, with an estimated price reduction of more than 22 centavos per kWh, or about P36 a month for households consuming 200 kWh monthly.

For business establishments, electricity rates are expected to go down by 5 to 12 centavos per kWh.

Investors still drawn to gov't securities

By Michelle V. Ramos

THE LACKLUSTER ECONOMIC environment caused by the global crunch has pushed investors to safer instruments and away from perceivably risky assets in the first quarter, according to the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas.

Data from the BSP, which oversees liquidity movement in the economy, showed that Treasury bills sold by the government in the first quarter were oversubscribed by P60 billion. The excess amount of bids for the virtually risk-free securities was 130-percent higher than the P26 billion registered the previous quarter.

The government only programmed to borrow P45 billion worth of T-bills—with tenors of 91, 182, and 364 days—in the first quarter. But bids reached P102 billion.

The amount of T-bills borrowed formed part of the P92 billion worth of government securities sold in the domestic capital market.

The Bureau of the Treasury was not too keen on borrowing in excess of the program despite decision of fiscal authorities to raise the budget-deficit ceiling for the year. The government said it would increase the program's borrowings by availing of official development assistance (ODA), which are cheap loans from foreign institutions.

"Ample liquidity in the financial system due to monetary easing to spur economic as well as investors' preference toward safer havens, contributed to the strong demand among domestic banks for government securities," the BSP said in a report.

The BSP said banks, the ones that buy T-bills and other government securities for their own investments and for their individual clients, have wanted to look to these assets as risk-free assets in the first quarter to anticipation of lower yields in the months ahead.

"The weekly primary auctions of Treasury bills continued to receive bids in excess of the offered amounts, as banks were said to be safe places to park their excess cash holdings in expectations of further easing in the policy rates," the BSP said.

The BSP has been easing key rates since December to encourage banks to lower lending rates (they charge their clients).

Promoting bank lending, which supports investments and activities, is necessary to sustain growth of the economy until a global downturn, the BSP said.

BSP data also showed an increase in bank deposits as of February. Total bank deposits amounted to P3.1 trillion as of end-February, up 14.8 percent from P2.7 trillion in the same period last year.

The BSP said the increase in deposits was accounted for by the rise in time and demand deposits during the regular savings.

While demand for safe investments were up in the earlier months of the year, the BSP said demand for equities weakened in the first quarter.

The Philippine Stock Exchange Index (PSEi) settled at an average of 1,884.5, index points in the first quarter, down from the previous quarter's 3,951.8 points.

Housing projects get perks

By Abigail L. Ho

THE BOARD OF INVESTMENTS has awarded non-pioneer status perks to two mass housing and one furniture manufacturing projects worth P954.1 million.

The biggest among the three recently approved projects is the P500.5-million mass housing project of wholly Filipino-firm CLRP Development Corp.

Dubbed Valley Mansions Condominium, the project entails the construction of a five-story building on a 1,395-square-meter property in Mandaluyong City.

The project is expected to generate 76 jobs when commercial operations start next month.

Another mass housing project that the BOI approved is that of Dalfinnan Builder and Development Inc. for the P134.7-million Sterling Manors in Imus, Cavite.

The project involves the development of 3.44 hectares of land and the establishment of 317 low-cost housing units.

When operations start in July, the project is seen to provide jobs to 158 persons.

Also, the BOI extended perks to Tida Cebu Furniture Manufacturing Inc.

The almost wholly Singaporean-owned company will invest close to P25.5 million in a company that will engage in the manufacture and export of furniture, fixtures and furnishings for export to Hong Kong, Macau and the Middle East.

The Mandaue City-based firm, which will have its base of operations in a 3,000-square-meter building leased from Oxford Industries Inc., will employ 300 people when commercial operations start next month.

Projects granted non-pioneer status by the BOI will enjoy a four-year income tax break, duty-free importation of capital equipment, as well as other fiscal and non-fiscal incentives.

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Investments of Variable Life Insurance Contracts	Current Week (May 25, 2009)	Last Week (May 18, 2009)
Bond Fund - Peso	1.7184	1.7090
Managed Fund - Peso	1.9539	1.9414
Growth Fund - Peso	1.0565	1.0495
Equity Fund - Peso	0.8168	0.8099
Peso Income Fund	1.0000	1.0000
Income Plus Fund	1.0000	1.0000
Balanced Fund - Peso	1.0000	1.0000
Balanced Fund - Dollar	1.0000	1.0000
Bond Fund - Dollar	1.0000	1.0000
Managed Fund - Dollar	1.0000	1.0000
Growth Fund - Dollar	1.0000	1.0000
Equity Fund - Dollar	1.0000	1.0000
Income Plus Fund - Dollar	1.0000	1.0000

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BUSINESS

BPOs not entirely crisis-proof, study says

But downturn's impact described as 'minor,' 'moderate'

By Abigail L. Ho

WHILE RELATIVELY SHIELDED from the worst effects of the global economic downturn, business process outsourcing firms admit that they are not entirely recession-proof.

In a survey conducted by the Business Processing Association of the Philippines and Outsource2Philippines, 83 percent of respondents said the global recession had at least some impact on their companies.

However, the impact on their businesses, said the majority of those polled, could be classified as "moderate" or "minor."

The survey ran from March 31 to April 28, with 160 BPO executives participating.

Only 3 percent of those surveyed said the impact of the socio-economic downturn was "very significant," while another 16 percent believed the effect on their businesses was "significant."

Responding to the challenging global economic environment, 68 percent of the executives polled said their companies introduced new services, recognizing that new revenue streams would provide a silver lining during these trying times.

"The results of the survey suggest that despite some challenges associated with the global financial crisis, innovative firms are identifying new opportunities as a result of the crisis. This is enabling them to continue growing their businesses," BPAP executive director for information and research Gillian Joyce Vitero said in a statement.

More than the impact of the global recession, the revealed that locally-operating BPO firms were concerned about the growing lack of qualified people for available BPO posts.

More than half of those polled said they were only able to hire about seven of 10 applicants.

But when the industry had gearing for it was its decreasing rate of attrition or resignations.

Vitero said 79 percent of respondents saw attrition as the "same," "decreasing," or "decreasing significantly."

Fifty-three percent of those surveyed said the attrition rate in their companies was 10 percent or lower. Another 20 percent said the attrition rate of between 11 percent and 20 percent, while 17 percent said their attrition rate was more than 21 percent.

The complete results of the study titled "State of the BPO Industry: Midyear Report" will be released on June 16.

4 projects worth ₱7.64B get Neda nod

By Reena F. Domingo

THE NATIONAL ECONOMIC AND DEVELOPMENT Authority yesterday approved four projects worth a combined $7.642 billion.

The biggest of these is the $6.2-billion Renewable Energy and Climate Change (Reach) facility, which will be funded partly by the European Investment Bank.

The Reach facility is aimed at providing local government units (LGUs), government-owned and -controlled corporations (GOCCs) and private enterprises access to medium- and long-term funds to finance their projects involving renewable energy, climate change mitigation and adaptation.

The Reach facility, which will be disbursed in three years from the fourth quarter of 2009 to 2011, is expected to generate about 3,495 new jobs.

The second project consists of four road-area rural-connecting projects with a total of ₱705 million to be funded through a grant assistance from the Korea International Cooperation Agency.

This project is expected to increase the incomes of 3,160 farmer beneficiaries and provide jobs for people in Hagonoy, Malolos, Bulacan and Davao del Sur.

The third project is the ₱337-million Agricultural Credit Support Project (ACSP).

Finally, the Neda also approved the request of the Land Bank of the Philippines for a 7-million-euro fund replenishment of the KfW loan for the LCEs investment program.

Landbank requested the additional funds amounting to ₱439.83 million and loan extension of four years to Dec. 31, 2014.

Alsons unit to invest in bioethanol

By Jerry S. Bueno

THE ALCANTARA GROUP'S POWER SUBsidiary, Conal Holdings Corp., plans to invest around $50 million to a bioethanol plant in Cagayan de Oro.

According to Luis R. Vinson Jr., Chief Financial Officer of parent firm Alsons Consolidated Resources Inc., the proposed plant would have a rated capacity of 100,000 liters a day and will use as feedstock cassava chips from the province and nearby Bukidnon.

At this rate, Alsons chair and president Tomas C. Alcantara said the company would require up to 12,000 hectares of land planted to cassava.

Alcantara noted that despite the drop in the prices of petroleum products from last year's high of $147 a barrel, bioethanol production remains viable.

According to Alcantara, the "chemistries of alternative fuels is stronger than ever" and "the law requires that by this year, a portion of fuel for vehicles must be blended with biofuels."

Under the Biofuels Act of 2006, oil companies are mandated to pre-blend gasoline with 5 percent ethanol starting this year, rising to 10 percent by 2011.

He added that the company was already in the advanced stages of completing a feasibility study on the production of biofuel using cassava chips.

In related developments, Vinson disclosed that Alsons Consolidated expects to post a modest growth in its revenues this year to P5.64 billion from P5.626 billion last year.

Also, the company expects to record a higher net income of P610 million in 2009 than a year-ago figure of P482 million, due mainly to planned cost efficiencies, Vinson said.

Aside from energy and power, the Alsons group has major investments in property development, aquaculture and agribusiness, timber products and mining.

BUSINESS Friday

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Margie Quimpo-Rubio

SM LAND'S HAMILO COAST
Growth in leisure property apparent
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PAOLO Fernandez goes underwater to capture nature's beauty. Canon promotes photography to help raise environmental awareness.

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Seeing green

Shoppers shifting toward eco-friendly goods, services

By Tina Arceo-Dumlao

PERHAPS AL GORE AND HIS compelling "Inconvenient Truth" had something to do with it. Or maybe it's just that Filipinos are literally feeling the heat brought about by the steady march of climate change.

Whatever the reason, it is undeniable that Filipino consumers have become more conscious about their impact on the environment, and this heightened awareness of the size of their carbon footprint has affected their shopping habits.

Many now tend to hand over their cash in companies that look after the so-called triple bottom line, that consumers not just profit but the impact on the environment and communities as well.

Responding to change

Retail and manufacturing companies have been quick to respond to the change, positioning their products to appeal to consumers who have become increasingly green-minded.

Manufacturer General Electric, for instance, has embarked on an "ecomagination" strategy, which calls for the building of innovative technologies and solutions that will help customers address environmental and financial needs and, at the same time, help GE grow.

As part of this program, GE is committed to reduce the group's greenhouse gas emissions by one percent and water consumption by 20 percent by 2012.

GE said that since ecomagination's inception in 2005, GE has saved more than $100 million in energy costs, developed more than 70 ecomagination-certified products and earned $17 billion in revenues last year just as other companies in the United States struggled to post revenues given the severe economic downturn.

These products showcased at the Starali project of Ayala Land Inc. include GE's Homespring Systems, which is designed to provide modern homes with cleaner and safer water from each faucet and the GE wind turbine to power a home.

Rising tide

Philips, meanwhile, is feeling the impact of rising environmental awareness on the sales of its energy-efficient compact fluorescent lamps.

Philips estimates that it produces about three of 10 CFL lamps in the market, and it intends to further tighten its grip on the growing CFL market.

The bestsellers are the Philips Essential Lamp, the cheapest CFL in the market at P99 each; Xtra-fit, P199 each; and the Ambient, dressmaker CFLs that give the same warmth as the incandescent lamps but consume much less energy.

Rico Gonzales, CEO of Philips Electronics and Lighting Inc., said sales of the CFL design—which are at least double the size of incandescent lamps—have been increasing despite the economic slowdown as consumers are more educated about the benefits of using energy-efficient light bulbs.

"They now know that with just a simple switch from incandescent to CFLs, energy can be saved and mother earth can be saved from global warming," Gonzales said.

Sales increase

Electronics giant Canon of Japan is likewise benefiting from the buyers' desire to do right by the environment as sales of its image scanners, facsimile machines, copiers and inkjet and large format printers that feature energy savings continue to rise.

"Our customers have just recently begun being more aware of

SEEING B2-5

Changing consumer values quickly

MARKETING Rx
Dr. Ned Roberto
& Andy Roberto

...HERE'S THE LAST IN THE SERIES of columns we're devoting to the set of questions we received on the subject of brand positioning or repositioning.

The last question relates to the issue of whether you can quickly change the differentiator in your brand's positioning when the differentiator represents a value primarily consumer value. In effect, it's asking if and how you can quickly change your consumers' priority positive values.

The conventional wisdom asserts that you can not. This is why value formation programs are all for the long-term. The model of behavior change starts with changing attitudes for a benefit that would lead to changing the different attitudes that underlie the many beliefs.

In turn, the attitude change will eventually change the low values behind the attitudes. What you second is changing the low behavior determining values, that's when behavior will change. It's a long and time consuming process.

What has been overlooked is our almost blind adherence to this behavior change model as its opposite model, which treats behavior as the cause and the values as the effect. Change behaviors and values will change along with the behavior change.

The POW example

World wars, regional and country wars were the occasions when this model took preeminence over its more traditional model in drawing out information and "confessions" about your behaviors.

For example, during the Korean War, captured American soldiers were in prisoner-of-war (POW) camps under either the North Koreans or the Chinese Communists. It was known that, to gain compliance, the...

North Koreans favored torture whereas the Red Chinese followed what they called a "lenient policy."

And yet, it was the Red Chinese who were much more effective in getting POWs to inform on each other. The Red Chinese were also very successful in getting POWs to publicly state favorable views about their captors.

Robert Cialdini in his book, Influence: the Psychology of Persuasion, recounts that after the Korean War, a team of American neuropsychiatrists studied returning POWs to the Chinese camps. The study sought to find out, among others, how the Chinese indoctrination program worked.

The team found out that the Chinese prison camp program started with something small and almost trivial. A prisoner would be asked to make a...

...agree with, for example, very mild anti-American statements like "My country is not perfect."

Then the POW would be asked next to make a list of "what specifically are not perfect with America" and then sign the list. Later, he would be asked to read his list to a discussion group with other POWs. Much later, he would be asked to write an essay to elaborate on his list.

Then the Chinese would use the name of this POW plus his essay in an anti-American radio broadcast aired in his native camp as well other POW camps and even American forces in South Korea. During this process, and at the end of it, that essay writing POW found himself changing not only his image of himself but also that of his captor and his country.

This series of "small behaviors" led to the change in his "values" to evidently short period of time.

It's probably because of this forgettable context that none of us chose to ignore the greater power of this value changing model. Isn't it rather sad that the US forces managing prisoners at Guantanamo Bay forgot such lessons of our history. Of course, there are many who will be quick to challenge the relevance of those lessons to Guantanamo Bay and its prisoners. After all, those American POWs were not terrorists.

From Kadinco to Al Gore

Let's now move from the realities of war to the realities of the marketplace. If we open our eyes and minds, we will come to realize that this model of instant change is the very basis of all successful consumer and trade promotion campaigns.

When factory, for example, handed out product samples to users of Bonjay, consumers who accepted and tried it found that their own acceptance and trial usage set in motion the process of value change within their minds. What happens if...

...are satisfying and usage finds the Bonjay consumer who just tried the product saying to herself: "This wasn't at all bad. In fact, it has an added advantage over Bonjay. Aside from achieving muscle pain, it also gets rid of this itch. (So that must be why it's named Kadinco.)

Next week, you'll read *the last half of how to change consumer values quickly. Keep your questions coming. Send them to Marketing Rx@INQUIRER.net.*

By Roger Pe
Contributor

AROUND 170,000 PEOPLE feared to Beichuan, southwest of China's Sichuan province. When an earthquake struck last year, the city was completely demolished.

After a category 4 cyclone hit Myanmar that same year, 22,000 people were killed while 40,000 went missing, compounding an already battered will on property and agricultural crops.

In those instances, we are one with the world. The inherent, unique Filipino ingredient quite always surfaces.

On June 16 to 17 this year, the country's first Bloggers will be summoned by Filipino marketers to counter an economic recession that has already claimed millions of jobs around the world and caused severe damage to the global economy.

The Philippine Marketing Association is calling a summit, tabbed "Sin, Pin Can," to stir up patriotic action—a big step to conquer the adverse effects of a downturn, hoping that, if we do it cooperatively we can...

...drive over the crisis' bumps.

Sharing the launch of the event last week, Mylene Abiva, president of PMA, said, "marketers, advertisers, event agencies should get out of their comfort zones and offer help...by doing marketing for humanity—a solution to facing the crisis."

In the two-day summit, speakers from PMA's pool of members will cover topics related to the current crisis, its own parts: Crisis marketing, issues and resources from critical marketing to out-of-the-box marketing strategies.

The economic outlook

"Can OFW remittances continue sustaining our economy? If yes, for how long, if no, what are the viable alternatives?"

Suggest by these questions? How the silver lining aspects to their respective fields tackle them head on.

Professor Bernardo Villegas of University of Asia Ortiz will speak on what's in store for the country. Chair of Campaign for Good Way Ong will share insights on how the current Filipino consumer behavior changes during difficult times.

Americhem Chamber of Commerce president Joanne Chamberlain and Ricci Association vice chair Claude Hubscher will talk about how economies going around the world are...

...charting road maps out of the crisis and how they are charting directions to "bring them home to the next levels."

Press Secretary Cerge Remonde will speak on how the government is meeting the current crisis while Businesses Processing Association of the Philippines CEO Oscar Salas will speak on the BPO-IT industry, the fastest growing in the Philippines, and how it hopes the country can attain 750,000 more jobs.

More user-tailored marketing

Seven more topics are lined up the remaining with Dr. Toni Dee Ruiz of Nanyang Business School Singapore, heading the list of speakers. The Filipino economist chair of the university speaks on revisiting the 4Ps of marketing, emerging new Ds and other paradigms reshaped by bold marketing.

Dr. Luz Stephen Jimeng, president of Association of Southeast Asian for Postal Trade to Asia Pacific and De La Salle University professor, puts her presentation in a nutshell: "The market what you produce and produce what you market. When you are able to do that, there are no business problems, only management problems."

Other speakers include Junedo Ee, chair and chief marketing specialist of Mammith and Fieldex; Ramon Lopez, executive director of Philippine Center for Entrepreneurship; Ariel Guerrero, chair and chief executive officer of BBDO Guerrero; Dr. Sarah Gaisa, dean, College of Business Administration, Lyceum of the Philippines University and Chairs Santos-Cutiolo, president ABS-CBN.

For inquiries, contact the PMA secretariat at (632)4488900, 6368732, 6364333 or 6367700; e-mail philmarketing@pldtdsl.net or visit www.philippinemarketing.net.ph.

Score & noted:

2009 Cannes Film Festival best director Brillante Mendoza saved to work in the ad industry as production's designer by winning in a festival of Gregory A magnitude and pulling a controversial Japanese world cinema heavyweights. ... Quentin Tarantino (Pulp Fiction), Ang Lee (Brokeback Mountain), Jane Campion (The Piano), Ken Loach (The Wind That Shakes The Barley), Pedro Almodovar (Women On The Verge Of A Nervous Breakdown), his name in history to...

...are in place.

Nikki and Nikki Ng

Banana Peel has expanded from Divisoria to cyberspace

THERE is opportunity in crisis for Banana Peel.

Local flip-flops venture helps small entrepreneurs

By Rosella S. Tayag

WHILE THE GLOBAL ECONOMIC RECESSION has brought out the worst in some businessmen (pushing them to even take their own lives), other entrepreneurs have used the crisis to do something good—like reaching out to small-scale entrepreneurs through accessible shop.

Local business flip-flops company Banana Peel, with its outlet store on 780 Theys Street, Divisoria, sells slippers to small business owners at a discount.

Since the company's in-house designers produce six new collections every month, the outlet store sells the discontinued collections—an innovative way to help not just the company but also those who want to manage their own flip-flops business.

"Depending on (their) single retail purchase, the discount will range from 10 to 25 percent," said Paul Vincent Ng, Banana Peel operations manager and husband of company founder, Nikki Ng.

"This can be an extra source of income to those who were affected by the ongoing global economic crisis," said Nikki.

She assures buyers that the designs and products are still in good condition.

The store opened in December 2008 and is frequented by small owners and those from provincial areas and departments, who scour the wholesale market...

BANANA Peel's outlet store awaits buyers.

...of Manila for new products to sell.

"We opened a few businesses in the Divisoria area (before) and have seen a strong potential for growth," said Paul. "We are able to constantly tap the provincial markets."

Banana Peel is Nikki's brainchild, a brand that has a "happy and summery feel, (which) allowed us to create an idea of relaxation."

The idea was primarily brought about by the "flip-flop lifestyle" Nikki saw while studying political economics in Universidad (y) of California, Berkeley.

Her vision came to life in June 2002, with its department store as the first shop to carry the brand.

The first Banana Peel boutique opened in Market! Market! in Taguig two years after, and the company now has over 14 shops in Metro Manila and some franchisees in the provinces.

Meanwhile, the collaboration with 609 anniversary, with a special collection exclusive to the department store coming out soon.

The company has also ventured into online selling through www.bananapeel.net, which was set up two years ago. Even the internet-based store has had a taste of Banana Peel—the flip-flops enterprise has sold products to the United States, Singapore, Japan, Greece and recently opened a branch in Malaysia, where the demand is particularly strong.

Although competition has become tougher for the flip flop company with the entry of foreign brands, Paul believes the designs and affordable prices give Banana Peel an edge over its competitors. That, and the unwavering commitment to the customers. "We always ensure that we are able to ensure a product that consumers will like but, at the same time, are durable and long-lasting. Itself are affordable enough for any target market," he said. "This has always been the company's philosophy."

Seeing green

From page B5 »

the environmental impact of their actions. Ensuring that our products have already been translating those same objectives in mind for the past several years, customers would most likely prefer our products over others," said Ramon Z. Amoffen, Canon president and CEO, in a statement.

Customers are also given the comfort that their being loyal to Canon products actually has a positive impact on the...

...a home instead of a loner to the earth," Amoffen added.

Canon, he said, has modified and enhanced its products so that they will consume less energy.

For example, the imageClass machines boast of an automatic shut-off function that turns off the machines after being idle for 5 minutes.

Other systems require constant power to maintain ideal operating temperatures.

"From the time they are produced until the time they are used, Canon products are already helping the environment. Designs are created virtually to eliminate the waste of actual prototypes. Materials used are earth-friendly with an assurance of high quality. ... earth, we have been doing it," ECO. Issues, user endorsements and hazardous chemicals free circuits and chips," Amoffen added.

And recently, Canon partnered with eco-friendly organizations that are into photography as part of its efforts to champion environmental protection.

One retail company that a huge fan that Filipinos are wearing their environmental awareness on their sleeve is Echo Store, which opened only last September 2008 but caught the imagination of buyers here and from abroad who are looking for products that make Mother Nature happy.

Edmonton founder Dodie U. Ann said that after less than a year of operations, its top sellers are: Reusable shopping bags; Reusable bottles; Reusable straws (like Messy Bessy cleaners); 2nd Life upcycle bags; earth-friendly notebook letters and stationery from recycled magazines.

"People like these products because they make a statement. The glass and the recipient both are benefited because the purchase of it and its use show that both of you care for the environment."

ECO-FRIENDLY products for sale all year round at Echo Store.

The Beach Club's pool has breathtaking views extending to the sea.

Kids especially will never run out of stimulating nature activities at the Beach Club.

Capitalizing on Manila Coast's grandeur of nature, Pico de Loro Cove targets active nature seekers with a myriad of land- and water-based activities such as kayaking, trekking, bike trails, snorkeling, and dining in scenic cities.

Weekend leisure lifestyle for city dwellers

Those seeking respite from city life can find refuge at Pico de Loro Cove, the first resort, upscale, within the sprawling, master-planned Manila Coast project of SM Land.

Pico de Loro is a community that offers low-impact recreation in one of a number of majestic, addressing the market of more active and vibrant weekenders and seasonal-treasure seeking more than the usual beach outing.

City dwellers may be familiar with the concept of a country club where amenities and activities are centered on a sport or theme such as golf, and patrons enjoy exclusivity of membership. Pico de Loro's leisure beach community will provide the constant comforts, service and exclusivity similar to that of a country club, but amidst a breathtaking natural setting to heighten the genuine sense of escape from the metropolis. The beach club currently centers around the development's first-rated coastline, arguably one of the most enjoyable within the Batangas area famed mostly for its resorts and beaches.

Pico de Loro Cove is not a resort but a private leisure residential community that offers the opportunity to own a leisure vacation place of one's own with its spacious condominium units. Residents can enjoy their weekend condo home or any time, with a "lock-up-and-leave" convenience. Units range from P4 million for a 40 sq m one bedroom unit to P17 million for a 116 sq m three-bedroom unit, with other typical types such as ground floor garden units, 3-level units, and penthouse units. A condo unit owner only has to activate their club membership to enjoy the use of the facilities and amenities of the beach and country club. Individual or corporate club shares can also be purchased separately. Prices have slowly increased considerably since Pico de Loro Cove's launch in 2007, what with the burgeoning development within the project.

The Pico de Loro Beach Club has been operational since February this year, with the Country Club component rounding out the comprehensive amenity by year-end. A Tropical Contemporary design pervades the setting, marrying clean, modern lines with colors and materials that blend into the natural setting. The beach club's lobby lounge opens up to a view of the Beach Chairs Inn and is a welcoming sight upon entering the club premises. Interior designer Manny Ramos liberally utilizes Filipino designers' furniture pieces such as those by renowned Cebuano Kenneth Cobonpue.

Pico de Loro Beach Club's signature restaurant is Ile Sun Coral Café, which is currently expanding its menu to include international cuisine such as Mediterranean and Californian-style family food. Other facilities and amenities include the spacious Bistro Bar and the Arrivals Lounge, a perfect venue for member events or social gatherings.

Guests will also be able to enjoy exciting outdoor activities such as hiking and trekking, swimming at the beach, and other popular water sports such as snorkeling and kayaking, among others. Its swimming pool for adults and children is adjacent to the sea, extending the waterfront leisure experience.

Manila Coast is the master leisure destination development of SM Land, the brand under which SM Investments Corp. is offering its portfolio of property projects, from primary homes and condo residences to leisure developments and master planned business districts. Those who seek to become part of the Pico de Loro Cove community may call hotline 658-0333 or log on to www.SMInvestments.com for more information.

Guests can enjoy a different kind of open air lounging experience at Pico de Loro Beach Club's Bistro Bar.

Pico de Loro Cove is not a resort but a private leisure residential community that offers the opportunity to own a leisure vacation place of one's own with its spacious condominium units

Growth in leisure property apparent

From page one B-1

plans (TMD) report in Mabini City. It is estimated that the local residential leisure market has grown to P150 billion since 2004, the period during which the industry could be considered to have taken off. Leisure residential offerings in the market now encompass open lots and houses & lots to house lots, condominium units, and membership clubs such as golf and country clubs.

Looking at prices as an indicator of growth, beach side lot prices have appreciated by five percent in the course of 2007 alone, while open lots are being sold at a range of P1,500/ sq m P10,000/ per square metre. Resort-styled condominiums in beachside or mountain ridge setting already introduced to the market have capped at values of P50,000 to P95,000/ per square metre.

Though the leisure marketing would also feel the brunt of the global financial crisis, leisure project could still easily pick up as the market tightens since leisure has become a way of life for consumers, according to Lucas. "2009 will be a period for consolidation, development and construction in preparation for the possible market upturn by 2011," he added. "Beyond a leisure product, a community core time can become a primary leisure community that becomes a way of life," said Lucas. "You can see examples of those in other countries where a leisure development becomes a destination or a community that is both leisure and resort-oriented. They did not begin as a typical urban center, but rather developed as a community where the economy is backed up by the local tourism industry and the leisure market itself."

The local leisure market may still be in its infancy, where product types are mostly residential in nature with much room for growth in terms of sophistication and offerings, innovation is key.

Malaysia's Langkawi, Thailand's Phuket, Indonesia's Bali, and planned leisure developments in Southeast Asia are some areas where leisure projects were initiated, are current examples of leisure and tourism cities that Batangas hopes to replicate in the future.

Planned versus unplanned

The advantage of a well-planned development is that it ensures the long-term economic sustainability of the community not only within the development but also outside the development and at the same time helps in the conservation of the environment, according to Lucas.

In a planned development, land uses are properly designated, said Lucas. "It is undeniable that better the capabilities of the place. You know whether a place is a watershed and therefore should be protected. A planned development is one that is aware of its impact on the environment and the community. You should develop what should be developed and leave untouched what should be left untouched."

With such as large development as Manila Coast, for instance, which covers a total area of 5,404 hectares and features a 25 km shoreline with 13 coves, only about 28 percent will be developed to preserve and protect the natural beauty of the terrain, according to Lucas. In fact, the entire 400-hectare development, having with the World Wide Fund (WWF), is committed to strictly follow best-largest sustainable development and environmentally responsible construction practices.

"Low-impact sustainable development" is a term referring to land planning and engineering that emphasizes conservation and preservation of the environment as an integral part of the development process and redistribution with community.

With the Manila Coast project, SM Land has been working closely with the community and the local government to conduct reef management and rehabilitation to replenish natural and fish sanctuaries. The developers also have created cooperatives with the fisherfolk and the farmers to help maintain the coast's natural resources and also to provide jobs to the locals.

Manila Coast is located as an exclusive, sustainable coastal development to grow in the coming years as a top-of-mind leisure destination. Its long-term master plan will be composed of themed villages and a network of commercial communities to provide various leisure living experiences. It is also envisioned to be home to diverse adventure activities and wellness services exclusive to members.

A Tropical Contemporary design characterizes the Pico de Loro Beach Club.

BUSINESSFriday

Playa de Laiya Cove is the first of seven planned developments at premier ecotourist leisure destination Nasugbu Coast. It will be home to an exclusive Beach & Country Club, Hiraduvias residential condominium, and a hotel.

Growth in leisure property apparent

JOSE LUCAS, Executive Vice President for SM Land

By Raquel P Gomez

Sea, sands, sea and mountains. These are the natural wonders of the country that, of late, have enticed real estate developers to move development from urban areas to rural areas with a goal of transforming sleepy coastal towns into thriving "leisure-tourism" communities.

Already a number of planned developments in beach and mountain destinations are being built out of the market by big developers to harness the still untapped "leisure" market or people with money to spend for travel, a vacation home, or just some weekend getaway, according to Jose Lucas, executive vice president for SM Land, the property division of SM Investments Corporation.

Lucas said the leisure market has expanded in the past 10 months and leisure developments in the form of condominiums, open lots, house and lots, farm lots and socialty villas are now targeting a broader market that range from upper mid income to luxury high end.

Majority of these leisure developments are concentrated in the Southern Tagalog region, particularly in areas along the Sierra Madre and Batangas coastline.

Currently, experiencing the height of leisure development is the coastal town of Nasugbu in Batangas where several major mixed projects that include SM Land's exclusive and upscale Hiraduvias Coast still bring positive changes to the town for the next five years, according to Lucas.

"Nasugbu has good beaches but it has never been really a destination until developments started over there. Whenever a developer sees the opportunity to convert an area into a leisure destination and they can bring people from them to live in the new community that opens up development. That will drive the tourism town and the local economy. If we put up hotels and condominiums the service industry will also happen," said Lucas. "When you have developers putting up investments in this location, you are actually seeing the private sector spending capital investments or pump priming backwater locations which the government should be doing. So you now see developers putting up necessary infrastructure such as access roads or terminals."

SM Land's Hiraduvias Coast, for instance, will enjoy easier access through a ferry terminal that the developer is building to link the leisure development with the Mall of Asia Complex, which is another property development of SM Land in Pasay City. The Mall of Asia Complex is envisioned to be a business and entertainment district that will host world-class office facilities mainly for the burgeoning business process outsourcing or BPO industry, and international resorts as well such as Kidzania and Grand Ionics, already found within the complex are the renowned SM Convention Center and indoor resort SM Mall of Asia, now the fourth largest mall in the world.

With the ferry terminal service, travel time to Nasugbu will be reduced from the usual two and half hours land travel to around 90 minutes. Likewise, a thirty-land route connecting a new national road, the Tarlac-Nasugbu Highway, will cut travel time to 90 minutes only. Current land travelers take the traditional Tagaytay route going to Nasugbu.

Investing in a leisure property, Lucas said, has always been favorable as the value of the property, particularly those with great views of the sea or mountains, appreciates over time

Favorable investment

Lucas said a current trend toward leisure property development is the adoption of the "lifestyle approach" especially as the property boom in 2000 wanes. People, Lucas said, are now very mobile, conscious of wellness and physical well being that they really go out of town, or to areas from their selling areas here to find peace and relaxation, or enjoy beach activities even for just a weekend.

While leisure homes may seem a luxury to many for a particular segment of the market especially the high end, "weekend getaways and an active lifestyle have become a practice and even a way of life to customers. People are now starting to look for properties or opportunities out of town that will address that. So having a property out in a beach or at least having a membership to a leisure club really appeals to many people."

Investing in a leisure property, Lucas said, has always been favorable as the value of the property, particularly those with great views of the sea or mountains, appreciates over time.

Lucas provided an overview of the local leisure market on the recently concluded Philippine Real Estate Investment Conference of Asia Pacific Real Estate Association (PREIC-PREA) in Boracay.

The convenience of condominium living has been introduced to the leisure market...such as with Hiraduvias Coast's Playa de Laiya Cove.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY JEFFREY ACOSTA

LIFESTYLE Fashion & Beauty

The secret to Brad Pitt's young-looking skin

By Marge C. Enriquez
Contributor

It's an instrument with tiny needles–and it's no torture device

IF BRAD PITT LOOKS younger than his 45 years, credit should go to the Dermaroller, an instrument with tiny needles used to stimulate collagen, said Stella Magsalin.

Low-tension (not chemical peels, fractional laser resurfacing or microdermabrasion, the treatment does not produce bruising, swelling, crusting or bleeding in the targeted area.

Invented by a French doctor named Sicard Littl, the Dermaroller is touted on the principle of micro-needling. It is performed with a roller wrapped with many tiny needles, which then pierce the top layer of skin to a certain depth. This results in stimulating collagen formation while simultaneously leaving no other way for medications to be taken to enter effectively through the skin.

Micro-needling produces very slight wounds that merely open up the skin pores. The face will redden for a few hours. Collagen growth is then accelerated in the dermis layer as some of the blood vessels are ruptured directly below the skin's surface.

As blood thickens, it produces the right conditions for collagen and elastin to take shape. These same elements help the skin appear refreshed.

Collagen production

Dermatologist-surgeon Haseline Rosario explains that the Dermaroller is used to combat acne, melasma or hyperpigmentation, wrinkles and sagging skin.

"It's an instrument used for collagen induction or producing your own collagen. The roller head has lots of hypodermic needles to produce microinjuries on the skin. In turn, collagen formation is stimulated. There is cell renewal and better skin quality. The skin will be tighter," says Rosario.

A numbing agent is applied before the procedure. The Dermaroller is then rolled on the skin, making tiny perforations in the dermis, initiating the process to open microscopically. The body senses this as an injury and reacts to it by setting off the healing process.

This actually induces the making of collagen and elastin. By constantly continuing micro-injuries and activating the healing process, the body continues its repair until its job is done.

The Dermaroller entails much more scary than the device actually is. The needles are so fine that they produce a tickle sensation. As the skin's top layer is tough and flexible, the tiny punctures made by the roller heal quickly.

Right medication

Equally important is the medication applied after the rolling. Some uses adipose-derived stem cells that produce cytokines, proteins that stimulate new blood cells and interweave with the intrinsic tissues and the cell processes.

"Unlike topical creams, wherein the products are not fully absorbed, with the Dermaroller, you are producing microinjuries on the skin so that the barrier will be broken. We take advantage of that and apply the products so that they will penetrate the lower layer of the skin," says Rosario.

"This is basically regenerative medicine. Stem cells are harvested from fat tissue. The cytokines, which are the good things from the stem cells, are extracted, freeze-dried and formulated into a cosmetic product. They are recommended for anti-aging and pigmentation."

For melasma, the skin is infused with natural whitening agents such as arbutin, kojic acid and glutathione. Wrinkles are addressed with hyaluronic acid, while sagging skin and wrinkles are treated with vitamins to stimulate cell renewal.

The whole procedure takes an hour.

The Dermaroller is recommended for those who have tried other procedures but did not get the desired results.

(For details, call Centurion Advanced Face and Body Sculpting Institute at 330-4078 and 488-8926. Located at South Pearl Plaza, Pasco de Magallanes, Makati City.)

BENCH stars Jean Chua with Abigail Ferrer, Bench Supervisor Mali Israelsson, Chiara Enzo with Angel Dolor and Ferdinand Ferrer

WINGJO Lee with Seyon Lim, Kimmie Lim, Kai Lim, Bryan Lim and Shara Tio

NEW Bench Body endorser Katrina Halili going reggae in stylish lace one-shoulder gown (above) and in sexy Bench Body two-piece bikini (right)

CATHY Yu-Lee Fruganne and Peter Go of Bench Fit Boutique franchise, with Monica Lim

Hot Katrina Halili is new endorser of Bench Body

GRACE and Edgar Lee, Bench Sportswear Consultant & marketer

ROBINA Gokongwei

WITHOUT BATTING AN EYELASH

Beatrice Ancheta

Photos by Alex Van Hagen

Styling YBL Photo Solutions

DIVINE Lee and Jenny Tiongco with talented designer Charina Saret

BUSTAMI To right is son Rina Dewi and her steady escort, handsome Dimber Bramjo

KAMIN and Oscar Chua

YOUNG businessman Francisco Delgado with his steady beau, gorgeous Heart Evangelista, and Bea Constantino

THREE talented artists: Geoff Gonzales, Eddie Poblador and Ryan Villamael with L'Oreal's Bryan Tiongson

HOTSHOT hosts L'Oreal corporate communications manager Tessa Dungca, L'Oreal Professional products division GM Bryan Tiongson and Revitalize product manager Bimbi Salva

RACHEL and Raoul Alejandro

MARC Villar and Nicole Whitesell

MOI WITH Mr and Sales, owner of Residence at Edsa Shangri-la Hotel, and the salon's top gal Jean Carver

CHERYL Tin with Veronica Peralta, Sissy Rodrigo and Karina Manrubia

ANGEL Jacler and Anna Reyes

MAESTRO in a row, Charlie Tito, Rolly Inciong, Mickey Quicoy, Phoemela Baraquia

LENNY Tiongco, Trina Cruz, Bianca Mesina-Navarro and Joy Cancimilla

Relax, see a movie–while having a foot massage

It's Blue Water Day Spa's innovative and exclusive take on the usual pampering

By Arnelle S. Tayao

WHAT'S BETTER THAN RELAXING in front of a wide movie screen with your favorite flick on?

Getting a foot massage with it.

No, it's not a gimmick you'll find at mall cinemas—it's an innovative take on the usual foot massage introduced by Blue Water Day Spa in Ortigas.

The Spa Theatre, which can house up to 28 clients, has all the elements of a modern Cineplex: State-of-the-art screen and projector system, latest speaker technology and modern spa chairs.

All that, and BWDS' well-trained therapists, who undergo 45-90 days of training to provide customers with foot spa and massage services.

"This unique concept is a Blue Water Day Spa exclusive," said BWDS vice president Francis Ryan Soriano. "[It's] an essential part of [our] unrelenting effort to make going to the spa a totally enjoyable experience."

New treatments

The Theatre was introduced at the Blue Water Day Spa Premiere, May 20, at C5 Events Place, Greenhills, hosted by Phoemela Baranda.

Launched also were four new treatments. The Athlete's Massage, designed for active people for optimal body performance and prevention of injuries; Tibetan Meridian Fire Therapy, which uses fire and slimming massage techniques to get rid of fat deposits; Comfort Zone Warm Stone Therapy, which uses heated stones to relax the body; and Oxygenal Enzyme Skin Peeling, which uses organic products to restore the skin's softness, smoothness and suppleness without the harsh effects of chemicals.

BWDS' new image models, singer/actress Karylle and international ramp model Akihiro Sato, were also at the premiere.

Karylle currently plays Helen in one of ABS-CBN's afternoon shows "Maria." She has also released three albums to date, and has appeared in a number of productions for film, TV and theater.

Sato, on the other hand, made his mark in the country primarily through TV commercials of Nescafé and Close-Up. Although half-Japanese and half-Brazilian, Sato says he feels at home in the Philippines because his features are more Filipino. He has even started to learn Tagalog.

KAZEMIKO Sato and Karylle, BWDS' new faces

GUESTS at the Blue Water Day Spa Premiere were given a taste of the Spa Theatre.

HOST Phoemela Baranda and a BWDS therapist explain the Oxygenal Enzyme Skin Peeling treatment.

"It's what I'm contemplating on right now," he said. He plans to eventually go into acting. "I like drama or romance. You get to show more of yourself."

Spa lovers

Both endorsers are spa lovers. Karylle visits already a BWDS client even before she became its image model.

"I felt honored when they asked me to endorse the spa," she said. Since it's a celebrity-endorsed spa, I'm sure I'll be seeing a lot of celebrities there."

Karylle also likes the fact that BWDS is a homegrown spa. "I'm supporting a Filipino-owned business," she said.

Sato said he took likewise. "My ideal date would be at a spa or cinema, then dinner." His favorite is the Traditional Watsu Massage, otherwise known as Aqua Massage.

"It totally works the body because [the massage] is very hard. I usually have it done for two hours," Sato said. For Sato, going to the spa is all about taking care of one's self. He also likes BWDS' Chocolate Slimming Therapy, "because it makes you sleep."

Merger

BWDS was the product of a merger of facial and spa treatments. "My mom was into facial treatments, while my dad was into spa services," said Soriano. "So I thought, why not combine the two? The cause, before, no one was really doing it."

Four years and six branches later, BWDS continues to flourish as one of the Metro's best places to experience "mindful wellness."

"I think three factors make us stand out," said Soriano. "[These are] our services, which come from all over the world; facilities that are all first-class; and customer service."

Visit www.bluewaterdayspa.com

Ayala Malls

Lovelife!

VOLVO C30

VOLVO S40

THE A-LIST LIFE
IS WAITING FOR YOU AT THE AYALA MALLS.

SHOP AND WIN A VOLVO S40, VOLVO C30
AND A TRIP FOR 2 TO LONDON AT THE GRAND DRAW
60 WINNERS WILL BE DRAWN EVERY MONTH.
A TOTAL OF 180 A-LIST EXPERIENCES WILL BE GIVEN AWAY.
PROMO LASTS FROM MAY 29 TO AUGUST 28, 2009.

A-LIST EXPERIENCES:

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P10,000 worth of gift certificates from any Ayala Malls restaurant

UNWIND, RELAX AND LET LOOSE
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A NOOK TO CURL UP WITH COFFEE AND A BOOK
P10,000 worth of gift certificates from any specialty bookstore and/or coffee shops in any Ayala Malls

IT'S RAIN'STYLE
P10,000 top shopping spree in any Ayala Malls one store and/or entire package at any Ayala Malls' Tenants

SPOIL YOURSELF
P10,000 worth of spa and beauty services (beauty salons, nail spas, detox clinics, and the like) in any Ayala Malls

DRAW UP THE GLORIA AND GLORIETTA
P10,000 worth of gift certificates from any Ayala Malls restaurants and/or restaurant stores

DRESS TO IMPRESS
P10,000 worth of gift certificates for a shopping spree in retail brands and/or department stores

GREAT FOOD GALORE
P10,000 worth of gift certificates for a bargain-hunting adventure at any Ayala Malls

SUPERMARKET SUPER RAVER
P10,000 worth of gift certificates for grocery shopping at any Ayala Malls

GET FIT AND FAB
P10,000 worth of gift certificates from any Ayala Malls sportswear

GREEN YOUR ROOM
P10,000 worth of gift certificates from specialty home or appliance stores at any Ayala Malls

SPRUCE UP YOUR STYLE
P10,000 worth of gift certificates for shoes, leather goods and accessories at any Ayala Malls

Gloria Maris · Greenbelt · Trinoma

atlantic · Philippine Airlines · Volvo

LIFESTYLE Fashion & Beauty

THE MALL chain aims to upgrade its image with "experimental" styling and newly added globe/brands. At right, mini-dress with asymmetric neckline.

Returning to its fashion roots in style

By Cherche Y. Maral

IT SEEMED RATHER ODD THAT the country's biggest retail chain hasn't held a fashion show in over 10 years.

But on Tuesday night, SM Department Store made up for its longtime runway absence when it served as curtain-raiser for the Philippine Fashion Week Holiday 2009 shows at SM Convention Center, Mall of Asia Complex in Pasay City.

"Before SM became [a mall chain], as merchant [that it was a department store and fashion was a strong suit," noted Hiller Ocampo, SMDSP for marketing and communications. "We wanted to partner with a group that promotes Philippine fashion," she added.

This is SM's second year of partnering with Runway Productions' Fashion Week franchise, and the biz, owners of SM, aims to fill here to support the first night of the series of shows.

Spotted on the front row was patriarch and founder Henry Sy Sr. his wife and children, though parents, were less conspicuous, opting to take seats at the back of the venue.

"We want to establish SM as a fashion store as part of efforts to upgrade the stores," said Anthony Hocson, who tells his eponymous men's line at SM and is also a merchandising consultant for the chain.

Sy is also spearheaded the creative aspect at SM's Tuesday show, drawing diversion credits with Runway's Amy Espino, executive producer of Fashion Week.

"We want to upgrade our appeal even among the mass market. We're introducing global brands. We're keeping the same price points but with visual directions from international fashion labels," Hocson said. "The looks are aspirational but affordable."

Hocson put together 101 looks on Tuesday beginning the show with resort wear from in-house brand Cora Cabana—bikinis, robes, swimwear—"since we're a resort country and it sells all year round."

The street-wear, office wear and evening wear were a "mix and match of everything in the store," he said, including SM's own brands.

SM is introducing global brands–but at the same price points

RETURNING D2

LIMPING style-without silhouetting in-vore market Off-shoulder top and bubble skirt

back to school SHOES

TWEETY

KIDS

HANNAH MONTANA

KIDS

DISNEY PRINCESS

FLORSHEIM

ADIDAS

TWEETY

SKECHERS

Styles may vary per store
Children's Shoes Department

SM DEPARTMENT STORE

We've got it all for you!

PARADIGM SHIFT

Returning to its fashion roots in style

From page D1

the time, they [illegible]

SM has recently introduced global labels like Miss Couture and HUBS among its fashion offerings, plus a collection of imported accessories at BM Makati. Nocum said they decided to focus on the department store brands for this week's show, reserving the SM Boutique designer collections for October's Fashion Week.

"SM's fronts that our market is also becoming brand-conscious, though not all can afford designer brands. But we're incorporating global labels to our selections. This will be the direction of our prestige stores," he said, referring to SM's branches in Makati, Ortigas and Mall of Asia, among them.

"So, we're not abandoning our core market," Nocum added. "We're just upgrading our lineup."

FOUNDER Henry Sy Sr. leads his family in witnessing SM's first runway show in many years.

ITS LOMO runway show at Philippine Fashion Week, with 130 looks on parade, seemed to underscore SM's toughline regime: "We've got it all for you."

HOLIDAY-MAKERS

OFFICE CHIC TO AFTER-SIX

TEEN SENSATIONS

Size is Deceiver! Turn a 30 square meters studio condo unit into an amazingly spacious 3-bedroom unit!

Styles may vary per store
Children's Shoes Department

We've got it all for you!
SM DEPARTMENT STORE

Irresistible summer fragrance

Givenchy launches its Very Irresistible summer fragrances, inspired by the finest confectionaries and ice cream makers. Givenchy Very Irresistible Summer Sorbet includes Very Irresistible Givenchy Eau de Toilette and Very Irresistible by Men Fresh Attitude. The two scents are infused with violets, tender leaves, blueberries and cucumber tea.

Givenchy is exclusively distributed by Rustan Marketing Corp. and is available in Rustan's department stores.

Vanity Pocket

Liniment with VCO

Tai Chi liniments and oils is made of natural virgin coconut oil known for its antibacterial properties. It comes in Ginger and Chili variants that enhance blood flow, relieves aches and pains, and doubles as an insect repellant. It's also available as Ginger Rub Balm.

LUSH Bathos

Serena & Dan in Lush, NYC

The Gossip Girl "sandthee" again couple and every much "on" real-life couple Blake Lively and Penn Badgley were recently spotted in Lush's Upper West Side shop, New York. Spending over $200, they bought the lavender-laden Dreamtime bath melt (P370); the aphrodisiac violet, ylang and jasmine bubble bar Buffoo (P220); and Honey I Washed the Kids soap (P245 per 100g).

They also picked up sexy massage bars like Mango Tea buns (P425), made with white chocolate, honey, bananas and vanilla; and Soft Dover (P370), heart-shaped bar with real chocolate center. They also bought Treasure massage bar (P370).

In the Philippines, Lush is exclusively distributed by Shores Specialties Inc. and is located at Glorietta 4, Power Plant Mall, Shangri-La Mall, Greenbelt 3, Mall of Asia, and Bonifacio High Street.

Bra accessories

Mandeberry provides quick and easy solutions to your fashion concerns with their line of bra accessories to help you steer clear of unsightly bra straps, constant tugging and readjusting and awkward peek-a-boo moments.

Flexable Backless Strapless Bra has silicone adhesive technology and medical grade technology which provide the lift and support you need while wearing backless or strapless clothing, as well as cleavage enhancement. It can be reusable up to 40 times.

Concealer Bra Straps allow you to wear your favorite fashionable tops without exposing unsightly bra straps. Concealer straps are transparent, yet strong enough and easily attached to bra.

Flexable Petal Concealers offer the perfect handy-dress alternative when you choose to go bra-less or when wearing tops made with thin fabrics.

Stay Tapes double-sided body and clothing tape is perfect for securing clothing to avoid embarrassing wardrobe dysfunction.

Mandeberry is exclusively distributed by Rustan's Marketing Corp. and is available in leading department stores nationwide.

Shimmer in silver

Bench introduces the Bench Silver Dust collection composed of a lotion, hair gel and EDT.

The lotion is a light body moisturizer enriched with Mirsan shea butter and extra-virgin olive oil. A limited-edition product under the Bench Organics label, the product is in a light pink cream tone, with the signature soft and fine silver dust particles that make up the collection, accentuated with the collection's perfume. Available in handy 100 ml tubes at P168, it is safe for everyday use without fear of tar coming tainted.

Style your hair with Silver Dust hair gel which gives a super shiny finish and natural hold. It is accentuated with a fruity scent. Available at P78 for every 60g pack.

The EDT is a blend of red berries, peach blossoms and sandalwood which creates a floral fragrance. Packaged in a shimmering box, it costs P928 per 100 ml bottle.

The Bench Silver Dust body and bath line is available at Bench, Hotbench, Bench Body and Superbench boutiques and Bench To Go kiosks at Ayala Triangle mall, Robinsons Makati and Waltermart North Cities.

FRIDAY, MAY 29, 2009 PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER E1

LIFESTYLE

In the mighty (urban) jungle

From khaki to brights, raise your glam quotient

At least you won't be eating instant noodles for the next month and a half.

The affordable berry at ₱4,950.*

my|phone

The my|phone G2i Duo seriously means business. But relax ka lang because we got that "berry phone" with all the great features and more for much less. It even lets you chat on-the-go using Yahoo Messenger and MSN at may Dual SIM feature pa so you can do away with your other phone. So affordable, you don't have to lose your lunch to get it. It's my|phone from my country. Wala ka ng phone no.

*Suggested retail price

In the mighty (urban) jungle

IN THIS, YOU CAN'T DISAGREE with Mark—whether it's pants, shorts, skirts. But you can up your glam quotient—or lower it—depending on how you style and match it with interesting tops.

On this page is our take on must-have wardrobes for the urban jungle, shot right in the heart of the urban jungle itself—SM Bonifacio Global City's recently opened Trading Inc. and Sky Garden, the vast spaces on the second floor of the mall.

This postmodern urban rebel's look has the hooded, blouson-sleeved top with oversize buttons or chunkier pearls, prints, ruffles and roomy pockets.

Layer on a vest or semi-blouson to give that boxy, true grunge silhouette.

Do tuck in tweeters, or pipe pants. You can't miss.

Boxing trousers

Billowy top, pipe pants

Multi-textured

Vests and wide trousers

Believe it or not, Ellen Degeneres is now a beauty endorser

COVERGIRL COSMETICS RECENTLY announced that its newest celebrity endorser is Ellen DeGeneres. She will be the spokesmodel for the company's newest product, Covergirl and Olay Simply Ageless Foundations.

In a new generation of anti-aging makeup, Simply Ageless stays wrinkle-free and smooth. Fine lines and wrinkles, making them look less noticeable and providing beautifully flawless skin. Formulated with Covergirl and Olay's best technological advancements in beauty and skin care, the new age-defying foundation has been clinically shown to positively impact skin health and even lifting for improved skin appearance over time. Now, women no longer have to make sacrifices in real look and skin condition to obtain full coverage.

It is the first beauty campaign for the comedienne and Emmy award-winning talk show host. "I'm thrilled to be a Covergirl," said DeGeneres. "I've been promising to my Halloween makeup for years. Now I'll really you'll all be able to see it."

"Ellen is a quintessential Covergirl. She is smart, confident and natural, with a beauty and down-to-earth personality that fits perfectly with what Covergirl represents," said Jo Eggleston Bowers, vice president and general manager, Global Cosmetics, Procter & Gamble Beauty.

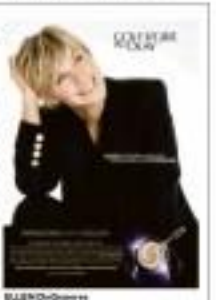
"She's a woman rising her fifties with verve and a zest for life that is truly uplifting. She is also a woman who knows firsthand from her daily routines in the makeup chair comparing for her national television show that many foundations—even expensive department store brands—can actually make you look older. She developed Covergirl and Olay Simply Ageless for all the women just like Ellen who told us they're looking for quality products that help them look and feel beautiful at any age."

Smooth, even finish

Covergirl and Olay Simply Ageless foundation has a solid foundation technology that allows the foundation to stay suspended over skin's imperfections. As it is applied, the Simply Ageless formula works with the skin's temperature to transform the foundation from a cream to a liquid on contact. The liquid then fuses on "invisible waterproof layer" that flows over the surface without gathering in lines, making imperfections seem to virtually disappear. The Covergirl and Olay formulas work together to balance skin's hydration and color variations to offer even protection and smooth, even finish.

Since its introduction in 1904, the Covergirl brand has been a pioneer in celebrating women's inner and outer beauty, and their drive to look and be their best selves. The long list of famous Covergirl spokespersons have included Christie Brinkley, Rachel Hunter, Tyra Banks, Niki Taylor and Molly Sims, and its current roster of Covergirls include the dynamic Queen Latifah, Rihanna and Taylor Swift.

Simply Ageless is available in all leading department stores at P525. Covergirl is exclusively distributed by Beauty Marketing Corporation.



ELLEN DeGeneres

Fil-Canadian designer's fashion homecoming

Noel Crisostomo cut his teeth in the fashion retail scene of Toronto

BLACK Let no labels clash with Fresh!: ruffs and mismatched plaid detail paired with white casual tuxedo gives a bit of an edge and understated luxury look!

By Alec T. Vergara

THE LOCAL FASHION scene may have lost some of its best designers to careers abroad, but in recent years, it has also gained world-class Filipino talents who have honed their skills abroad and are now giving something back to their country. One of them is Filipino-Canadian Noel Crisostomo from Toronto.

After almost 20 years spent in cities in Utah, Mexico, Santa Cruz and Peru (1981, among others), the Ryerson University-educated Crisostomo (he was one of the Canadian students who competed at Prada Transformer de Jovanni Trophies de Mode in the early '90s) has trained to ready-to-wear and couture industries.

"I'd like to believe that my design aesthetic is generally polished and sophisticated because of my technical training as a men's wear designer," says Crisostomo, who was barely 20 when he immigrated with his family to Canada in the late '80s.

This can be seen in his smart, tailored separates that are elegant yet wearable, but far from boring. The trained eye won't miss the ingenious cuts and subtle manipulations.

But its impeccable construction, which Crisostomo takes pride in, is the tailored collection's biggest asset on.

Having joined Toronto's fashion forefronts, a prestigious government project set up by the city to boost careers of fledgling designers, Crisostomo became a well-rounded designer early on.

Crisostomo also cut his chops doing red carpet numbers for actor and art women while working for fellow Canadian Stacey Dash. The other, he says, helped refine his approach to certain looks that didn't require as much tailoring.

He also has eye-catching pieces in various materials, exquisite silk and chiffon tops, and long, billowing cotton shirts in his Makati digs.

"Since I have been expatriate in Canada, you have no choice but to learn how to cut and sew to achieve your vision," he talks of those four years at Fashion Incubator.

Patience

Dealing with Canada's retail establishment, he says, instilled in him the patience of Job. Apart from their demands, one is during Crisostomo's time didn't pay on time.

Despite being a veteran success that now sees awards as a member, Crisostomo felt desired.

Before the situation could take its toll on his health, Crisostomo closed shop and joined Club Mahaan as a couturier.

"Viewed positively, the shift taught me how the retail industry works and what appeals to a broader market," he says. "Along the way, I established contacts with fabric suppliers in Europe and China."

Apart from opening his eyes to various possibilities, the exposure strengthened his resolve to strike out on his own when he later became creative designer at Paris, which was then busying up its Asian presence in Shanghai. Manila was now a mere hour hours away by plane.

It was to be his first and last posting outside Canada before his successive double in the

FIL-CANADIANS E3

Last Few Days Remaining for Happy Feet's Summer Sale!

Happy Feet fans now only have a few days left to take advantage of Happy Feet's Summer Sale! Enjoy up to 80% off on your favorite Happy Feet wooden sandals. From your popular Regina sandals, to sexy flats, and to other selected models, all wooden orthopedic sandals, there's sure to be a Happy Feet Sandal for you at a discounted price. So hurry on to your nearest Happy Feet Store or selected SM Department Store and take advantage of this super-hot offer!

UP TO 80% OFF

This Super-Hot Summer sale is ongoing at all Happy Feet Stores at San Juan Wilson cor. Pi Guevarra, Glorietta 3, Robinsons Galleria, Festival Supermall, Sta Fernando Avenue in Marikina, and Pavilion Mall in Biñan. Also available at selected SM Department Stores.

Perfect for phone SFX.

my|phone

BT Duo

So my phone BT Duo with Background Changer, you can change the background your visitors will hear. My caller will think you're on the of four even of you're really on the loudest party. It also has a Magic Voice feature that lets you sound like a child, a villain or somebody else. Perfect for making great phone SFX. May Dual SIM feature na so you can ride away with your other phone cd wala piang pera kaso it is only P5,795.* Di's my phone from my country. Mapa-ka-so phone ka.

*Suggested retail price

Skin-pampering products under P300

BELIEVERS IN AROMATHERAPY—the use of essential oils, herbs and botanicals to address certain beauty needs...will have a good reason for visiting the nearest Watsons outlet.

Himalaya Herbals, a prominent face Indian brand combines the best of Ayurveda, the science of ancient healing which makes use of specially selected herbs, and modern scientific research to get the best of both worlds.

The prices range from P59 to P299, surprisingly reasonable considering the product has a UK BHAD approval. Neem, the Ayurvedic equivalent to Lavender, is present in most products as it is a known sun-oil, antifungal, antibacterial, detoxifying, and disinfectant.

Star products: 1. Hair Gain Cream (P299)—enhances hair loss due to stress or environmental conditions by 26 percent after two weeks and controls and sun-downs up to 70 percent less hair loss in six months. The downside: it is meant to be applied to a clean freshly washed scalp by section and kept on overnight or one needs to wear a bathing cap so you a towel on their pillow to prevent product transfer. Also, it cannot work on hair loss due to male pattern baldness or genetics.

2. Acne and pimple cream with Silk Cotton Tree has an astringent effect to control acne and pimples. It also prevents breakouts and excess oil. Five leaf chasta tea to reduce inflammation and Aloe Vera which keeps skin soft and hydrated for faster healing and repair; it is mortifying as you can apply it whole face as a makeup primer to keep shine at bay while treating pimples. The pimples are flat and gone after three days, leaving no dark or red spots behind.

Kirsty Salas

My picks: 1. Neem Purifying Face Wash—cleans oily skin, removes light makeup and sunblock without making it dry and flaky, plus it soothes redness and inflammation. It feels cool to the touch as well as face feels refreshed.

2. Neem Face Pack—regulates excess oil, cleans clogged pores, exfoliates and improves skin texture. Apply like a mask, leave on for 10 minutes and rinse off with cool water while lightly massaging off. Never look finer, skin was never ever and skin stays shine-free longer so it is less used before applying makeup for a big date or party for oily-skinned men and women.

3. The Dental Cream a.k.a. toothpaste—but the color of cement but the formula is so thrilling, the mint very refreshing and comforting, it eliminates bad breath. Not only are teeth cleaned but the gums feel tight, healthy and become pink. No breakouts around the lip area as well.

Aside from the sustainable principle the packaging is very unisex so men need think twice about using them.

In most countries worldwide they are exclusively available at Watson's. Expect their potent bio-renewable (multivitamins, minerals and supplements) range to come in after a couple of years.

E-mail the author at kirsty.salas@yahoo.com

BLACK silk satin racer-back bias top and black vinyl-bonded skirt with tassels

Fil-Canadian designer's...

From page B3

family ultimately lured him back to the Philippines. Less than two years after Crisostomo's mother died of cancer in Calgary, it was his father who succumbed to the big C. He felt it was time to leave Shanghai and return home.

"One of the reasons I quit Paris was I wanted to spend as much time with my ailing father in Canada," he says. "I wasn't able to do that when my mother got sick. I wanted to make up for that."

After he and his siblings laid their father to rest, Crisostomo couldn't imagine him still working again in Canada. As he himself admits, the Toronto fashion scene no longer excites him.

Fresh start

"I wanted a fresh start," he says. "I wanted to do couture and expect JUTOS. It was a choice between China and the Philippines, where skilled labor is relatively affordable."

Since Crisostomo knows the language and how the Filipino mind works, he calmly decided to establish his overseas business in the Philippines.

"I've also come here [understand]o Filipinos have become," he says. "They make an effort to look good for much less. With so many good designers out there, the environment is palpable in the local fashion scene."

While reading his books in Manila and assembling his team, Crisostomo found the time to divide his knowledge with aspiring designers at De La Salle College of St. Benilde. Teaching comes naturally to him, as he also taught fashion for five years at Ryerson University.

"Just the other day, I came across a client who found my proven superstar," he says, amused. "She equated a dress' price tag with the amount of knickers it has."

Just when he thought he has seen it all, now comes a different animal called the Philippine market. But having been through worse times, Crisostomo's latest involvement seems no sin for him.

Neil Crisostomo's shop is at 1706-A J. Ocampo St. (formerly Y. Cruz Extension, Makati City. Call 899-7376, 0917-8881622).

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Editor Thelma Sinson San Juan
LIFESTYLE Fashion & Beauty
Contributing Editors
Jenni J. Epperson
Apples Alarm-Sadhwani
and Rio Francisco Pinero

Must-haves for men this season

Every guy should have a pair of perfect-fitting jeans

Mabuhay!

Jenni J. Epperson

A GOOD FASHION REvamp is all it takes to make any man look good. This season's quintessential fashion finds for many—simple and good-quality clothing and accessories—can go a long way toward hyping up your man's daily wardrobe.

The jean

Every man should have a pair of perfect-fitting jeans. Classic cut and wearable coast are the season's most wanted.

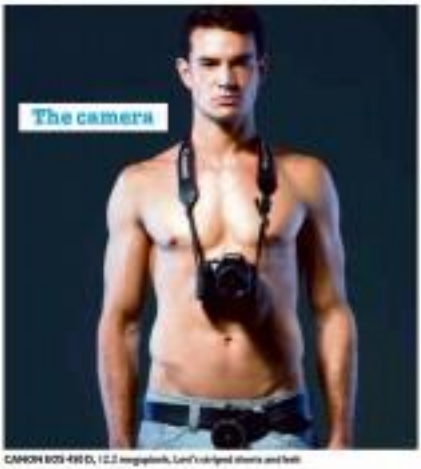
The jacket

Jackets, blazers and tuxedo coats have undergone major makeovers in the last few years. Gone are those many dynamic, edgy and with better fabrics. The premise is all about bizarre-looking jackets. As the Black Eyed Peas would put it: "It's so HOT!"

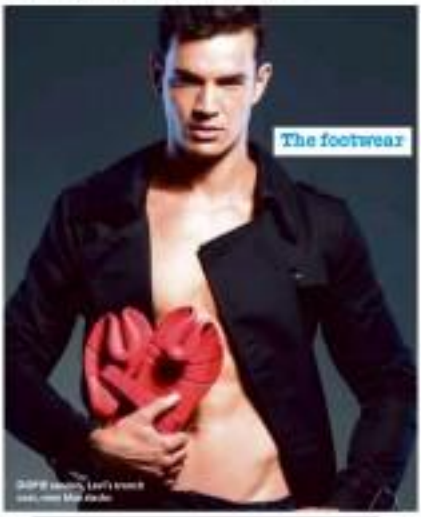
The sunglasses

Need a hidden charge? Liven up your man's look with modern shades. Glasses are cool, but a pair of modern sunglasses will instantly amplify his look.

CLASSIC cut and wear-in jeans are THE season's most wanted.



CANON EOS 450D, 12.2 megapixels, Levi's cut-aged shorts and belt



GUESS sneakers, Levi's trunck vest, vintage khaki shorts

LEVI'S Red Tab faded jeans, Levi's brown leather sneakers

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Must-haves for men...

Turn to page F11

The footwear

Lessen his carbon footprint with the latest eco-friendly footwear made from "sustainable, BPA and rubber -construction" from Depot, designed by Matthew Harrison. Do away with latex acid get hip with these easy-to-wear sandals.

The camera

Point-and-shoots are for sissies. Big, black and bulky SLR (Single Lens Reflex) cameras are for the big boys. Bigger is better, so they say.

E-mail the author at *fashion@inquirer.com.ph*

LEVI'S Red Loop-dark blue jeans, Levi's Red Tab silver jacket

FRADR sunglasses, Levi's denim jacket

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Head-turning Italian shoes

VIA SPIGA IS MAKING A STATEMENT THIS season through vibrant colors, intriguing materials and bold ornamentation.

The collection draws inspiration from a global bazaar. Wooden platforms, studded wedges and the ideal flat sandal are essential components.

These silhouettes serve as a fresh canvas, splashed with compelling patents and python prints, wood and bright summer colors so iconic they nearly vibrate.

Distant beauty is also in bloom—floral accents soften the rough snake prints, and the earthy appeal of wood is balanced by edgy studding detail. Whether she's exploring new heights in sky-high platform wedges or keeping her feet on the ground in a chic pair of flat sandals, the Via Spiga woman is sure to turn heads.

Established in 1983, Via Spiga is named after the main street in one of the most famed shopping districts in Milan, Italian designs, luxurious materials and beautiful detailing maintain the brand's heritage, reflecting the cosmopolitan woman's sophisticated, polished and feminine style.

In the Philippines, Via Spiga is exclusively distributed by Stores Specialists Inc. and is located inside Prince Suite—Greenhills 3, Eastwood Mall, Bonifacio Makati and Ayala's Alabang.

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Hollywood's favorite bag

TREADING THE CITY WITH Tod's summer fashion statement are the hottest Hollywood stars who attest to the brand's style confidence and craftsmanship.

On the streets, celebrities stroll with their fave Tod's totes.

Actress Anne Hathaway is seen carrying a Tod's G bag in Gucci Store Soho while out and about in New York. Another gorgeous and award-winning actress Keira Knightley and Betty Boop were also spotted carrying this hot new trendy while in Los Angeles. Kate Winslet is also a fan of the G bag.

France's first lady, Carla Bruni Sarkozy, is also a self-professed Tod's lover. She was spotted with the classic Tod's G bag in Dauphine. The original American sweetheart, Julia Roberts, arrived at the studio of David Letterman's show sporting the same it bag.

In the Philippines, Tod's is exclusively distributed by Stores Specialists Inc. and is available at the boutique located in Greenhills 4, Ayala Center, Makati and Rustan's Tower, Shangri-La Plaza Mall.

ANNE Hathaway (top left), Kate Winslet (below left) and Julia Roberts (above) relish their Tod's G bag (inset)

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LIFESTYLE Fashion&Beauty

'Love affair' revives Paul Poiret's perfume house

When picking scents, it's not wise to rely solely on smelling strips, says Les Parfums de Rosine founder Marie-Helene Rogeon

LA ROSE de Rosine, Paul Poiret's first scent, is revived and resumes the house's heritage

By Gracie V. Moral

MARIE-HELENE ROGEON produces a perfume when she decides she likes a particular scent, not when test subjects guarantee its success. In fact, her small company doesn't do market tests at all.

"I just decide," says the founder of the relaunched Les Parfums de Rosine, a French perfumery once owned by the legendary fashion designer Paul Poiret.

Working for many years in marketing, manager of a large company that sells made perfumes, Rogeon saw how strategic marketing and, yes, test markets, dictated the making of perfumes, ensuring not a beautiful product but a commercially successful one.

"The result is worse. It's not [personal] and it's not the way I want to make perfumes," she said at a press preview of her line at Rustan's Makati this week.

"Perfume is something creative. You find new ideals to create new fragrances. That's beautiful," she continued.

Rogeon, who works with a nose named Francois Robert, said a scent takes six months to a year, or even 11 months in rare cases, to develop.

"I stop when I really love it. To be honest, Francois tells me to stop because I could go on," she added with a laugh.

Rogeon's was a family of perfumemakers. It was her grandfather who made matches win for Napoleon III. In 1911, her grandparents worked with Poiret, who established companies for his daughters, Rosine and Martine.

VOIR ATTACHÉ (1)

MARIE-HELENE Rogeon comes from a family of perfumers who made matches win for Napoleon III. Her grandparents later worked at Paul Poiret's perfume house.

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	SMX • 8:00 PM FUNCTION WM 1 & 2	PREMIER COLLECTION A ANGELO ESTRA • JEROME SALAMANCA • JOEL PECORRA • RANDALL SOLOMON • RACHEL RAMIREZ • YANO REYES
27/WED	SMX • 5:00 PM FUNCTION WM 1 & 2	LUXE WEAR COLLECTION ALDRICH AMADEO • BOBBING GUEVARRA • EDGAR PAGARIGAN • EDGAR SAN DIEGO • JAY SUETGUEN • JOHN BALUMAN • MARICAR ROBINSON MARICHU TAN-GIDEON • PAMPIN BAUTISTA • ROLLIE ATIENZA • PAUL HERRERA • RAYSON MAVILA • RICHARD PAPA • ROEL ROSAL • ROLAND LIRIO
	SMX • 7:00 PM FUNCTION WM 1 & 2	SHANON PAMADINO
	SMX • 8:00 PM FUNCTION WM 1 & 2	PREMIER COLLECTION B CZARINA VILLA • ERIC DELOS SANTOS • JOHN PAMIS • MICH ESLICE • PIA GLADYS RIBEY • TINA ZAMORC
28/THU	SMX • 5:30 PM FUNCTION WM 1 & 2	DESIGN FUSION / VISIONS & TRENDS ANNA LEAH SALVADOR • ANTHONY CESAR RAMIREZ • ANRI LAGAT • ARNEL ZULUETA • DION PASTRANO • DONNA DELANTAR • HERBERT CUSTODIO JASPER CASTELO • KAT CORPUS • KAT 17 • PABLO CABAHUG • REGAN DULAY • SINDRA ARIEL VASQUEZ • VEIGHT FLORENCE • ZAVANDER TAN
	MOA • 6:30 PM MANILA BAY	Barbie
	SMX • 7:30 PM FUNCTION WM 1 & 2	RONALDO ARNALDO
	SMX • 8:30 PM FUNCTION WM 1 & 2	PREMIER COLLECTION C ANTHONY NOCOM • BANG PINEDA • ESTEN QUIJANO • JEROME LORICO • MARC TAÑA • OSSILLEN SIPINO
29/FRI	SMX • 5:30 PM FUNCTION WM 1 & 2	GRAND ALLURE COLLECTION ROY GUMO-O • BENJIE MANUEL • DAX BARAN • JAZ CERCEO • JOEL BAUTISTA • JOHN HERRERA • JONTE MARTINEZ • LORAINE CUA • LUCHO ARCEO MARC BANCT • MELVIN LACHICA • NAT PANLILIO • PHILIP TORRES • POPO DO • REN PANAHIMAT
	MOA • 6:30 PM MANILA BAY	JAG
	SMX • 7:30 PM FUNCTION WM 1 & 2	REENE SALUD
	SMX • 8:30 PM FUNCTION WM 1 & 2	PREMIER COLLECTION D CRIS CACALAHAN • DELBY BRACALES • DIMPLE LIM • EDWIN LIM • KERWIT TESORO • NORMAN NORIEGA
30/SAT	SMX • 2:00 PM FUNCTION WM 1 & 2	ROBIN TOMAS
	SMX • 4:00 PM FUNCTION WM 1	ARNOLD GALANG
	SMX • 5:00 PM FUNCTION WM 1 & 2	MICHELLE LIM
	MOA • 6:30 PM MANILA BAY	PENSHOPPE
	SMX • 7:00 PM FUNCTION WM 1	GERRY KATIGBAK
	SMX • 8:00 PM FUNCTION WM 1 & 2	M BARRETTO
31/SUN	SMX • 1:00 PM FUNCTION WM 1	JEFFREY ROGADOR
	SMX • 2:00 PM FUNCTION WM 1 & 2	PREMIER COLLECTION E CHRIS DIAZ • ENRICO CAMADO • JAKI REGALADO • JOHN ABILA • LEN MERCADO-ESTRELLADO • OLIVER TOLENTINO
	SMX • 4:00 PM FUNCTION WM 1	JORGE PALMOS
	SMX • 4:30 PM FINALE	human Kashieca bench/
	SMX • 5:00 PM FUNCTION WM 1 & 2	SASSA JIMENEZ
	SMX • 7:00 PM FUNCTION WM 1	LYLE IBAÑEZ
	SMX • 8:00 PM FUNCTION WM 1 & 2	MICHAEL CINCO
JUNE 1/MON	MOA • 6:30 PM MANILA BAY	READY TO WEAR COLLECTION AVA RAQUIZO • EDDIE CASTRO • EARTH CASTRO • JULIUS TARGO • MICKY MARTINEZ • MIKKI KONGCO • PRINCE DIESTRA • ROMAN PATA RICKIE ABAD • YVANKLE FERRARIS • ZIGGY MARELLA
2/TUE	MOA • 6:30 PM MANILA BAY	MENSWEAR COLLECTION ANTHONY NOCOM • BANG PINEDA • ESTEN QUIJANO • GERRY KATIGBAK • JEFFREY ROGADOR • JEROME LORICO • LYLE IBAÑEZ • M BARRETTO MARC TAÑA • OSSILLEN SIPINO • RANDALL SOLOMON • RAOUL RAMIREZ • YANO REYES • ZAVANDER TAN
3/WED	MOA • 6:30 PM MANILA BAY	PLAINS & PRINTS

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'Love affair' revives Paul Poiret's . . .

From page B1

Les Ateliers de Martine created decorative arts for packaging and advertising. Duelling with iconic Parisian perfumer Jean Patou, Poiret perfumed Corot-Chanel as the first designer to have his own perfume.

Chanel introduced No. 5 in 1921; Worth, La Rose de Rosine in 1913; Parfums de Rosine flourished until the market crash of 1929.

ROSEMARY got the nod of beauty editors at a blind preview this week.

INTERIORS of Les Parfums de Rosine's only boutique at the Jardin Palais Royal in Paris.

THE CLEAN and shiny Un Zest de Rose is an Asian sensation

Love affair

In 1991, Rogeon, who grew up fascinated with little perfume bottles and beaded silk trims lying around her grandparents' house, sought to revive the company, but with her own modern twist. She decided to focus solely on roses.

Apart from her love affair with the flower — for 20 years, she has had her own rose garden with 300 rose varieties — the perfumed rose that Poiret was also passionate about rated.

The rose logo on her perfume box is stylized from an original by Paul Ollby, who worked with Poiret at Les Ateliers de Martine. She says that in Japan, the customers of the rose fragrance fumilles have been classified into 12, each first (for 16 perfume varieties in her collection are unique from one another.

Rogeon's is one of the few perfume companies creating special niche products sold at exclusive distribution points, like Barneys in the United States, or Lane Crawford in Hong Kong.

It has only one boutique, at the Jardin Palais Royal in Paris. In the Philippines, it's exclusively distributed by Roman Commercial Corp. at Rustan's in Makati, Alabang and Shangri-La.

Rogeon's perfume line (she also has body creams and candles) is based on natural essences (or rose absolue and essence), each that varying results from each harvest of roses (sourced from Bulgaria, Morocco, Jordan and the south of France) could alter the oils.

Rohrer's constant challenge is to re-balance the mixture to make the quality and smell consistent.

Same spirit

Rogeon has reproduced La Rose de Rosine, though of "a little different formula" to compliance with modern regulations, "but in the same spirit." The jewellery store remains its cap seller. In fact, when she opened her boutique in 1991, she was selling only that one product, gaining her a lot of press for her audacity.

In Asia, where it's warmer, Un Zest de Rose...a blend of lemon essence, orange peel, green tea, jasmine and rose — is the bestseller. Rose d'Eté, with top notes of green apple and reminiscent of fresh-cut grass, is favored by the Americans.

The beauty editors at the Rustan's preview mostly picked Rosebery, which uses the unique raspberry essence. Its fresh green scent is reflected in its naturally green juice.

Rogeon and Rohrer create unusual combinations. Infusing soy, mint with roses (Diabolo Rose), anise (Zephir de Rose) or tea leaves and oil for men (Rose Initiale, Rose Prédée, inspired by an Indian friend who reportedly named for Rogeon cures black tea with chocolate.

Shunning to sprinkled stones over some of her heaviest perfumes, Rogeon said there are materials she wouldn't wear herself, but she's no less proud of them as products. A perfume reacts differently to individual skins, so she advised against relying solely on smelling strips. She said now regulations also advise that shelf life of a perfume is 36 months after the first spritz.

Rogeon has two rose scents for men, Rose d'Homme, which took 11 years to develop and is now No. 4 across Europe and a favorite in the Middle East; and Twill Rose, a woody green scent better suited for warm weather. Japanese men are beginning to take to them. Rose d'Homme's Dom, Rogeon told Verdis Fair, include Johnny Depp.

Well, if it's good enough for Mr. Depp...

ROSE PERFUME FOR MEN? It took 11 years to develop, but Rose d'Homme (below) was worn by the man, gaining approval from the likes of Johnny Depp. A greener variant, Twill Rose (above), is suggested for warm, tropical weather. The latter is inspired by a pink silk tie, thus the bottle accent.

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THE WORKING CLASS

Rina Silayan Go,
Lifestyle Editor

How to make the ordinary stunning

Michele Sison, designer, widow and mother, tells how she works at it

ONE OF THE CHALLENGES of growing up is not knowing what one wants to be. Blessed are those who know early on their dreams. But what about those who don't? Dig deep inside yourself to know what you truly enjoy doing the most.

For Michele Sison, there was no need for such introspection. At a young age, she was already showing an interest in fashion—she'd be sketching runways and dressing up her dolls with imaginative outfits formed out of handkerchiefs and scarves. Little did she know that, from dolls, she'd progress into dressing real, life-sized mannequins.

This interest never waned; she went to the University of the Philippines, where she graduated with a degree in Interior Design, then took up Fashion Design at the Fashion Institute of Design and Merchandising in Los Angeles, graduating cum laude.

She then decided to nurture entrepreneur by taking courses in Advanced Pattern-making and Professional Sewing at Central Saint Martins in London (the alma mater of Stella McCartney, Alexander McQueen, John Galliano).

Michele became an authority in craftsmanship and detail and decided to specialize in wedding, formal gowns and cocktail dresses.

Her classic interests her "frosty and mature clients alike sometimes come with a drawn/sketched, printed picture of an outfit they want "copied." Although she always desires to please her clients, she is not quick to say "yes," however, and instead first considers their body type and color match. She then makes suggestions so that the outfit becomes a product of a "design collaboration," not a knock-off.

Michele's design "philosophy" is to create something stunning out of the ordinary. She uses embellishment, even on a plain white T-shirt, by doing embroidery or beadwork. Lace, chiffon and crepes are her favorite fabrics...light, flowing materials that show off her girlish side.

Her more distinguishing designs are those on her bridal veils. Because for her, ideally, a woman should get married only once (Oh, dear!) and therefore wear a veil only once (Oh...dear, again!), she puts a lot of thought, creativity and uniqueness into bridal veils. She has done veils that are pointed, embroidered, and beaded, always making sure that each reflects the bride's personality.

To recover from stress (observed in her job, Michele spends quiet time in deep reflection and prayer early in the morning. Mind and soul fortified, she then hits the gym. Her fitting schedules in her studio, Michele Sison at Hotel, start after lunch. She makes it a point to be home for dinner with her son. Her Sundays are sacred, pamper-me days.

Style and typicity

The petite designer goes for a wardrobe that is bold and flirty in construction—with a sense of young sophistication and easy sophistication. The styles draw a woman (not a girl) who possesses experience and depth. She favors feminine shifts, workability pencil skirts with tiny cutouts, or sleeveless corsets paired with jeans or shorts.

When work demands travel, her fave colors are black, white, red, and blush nude—colors that are easy to match with her second shoes.

Under currents

Michele's dream-come-to-life didn't come without pain. She is a widow, with a 16-year-old son. Struggling to find balance between work and raising a teenager by herself, she realizes she needs a lot. "My fingers and toes are crossed whenever he is out there, and I'm always hoping he is safe, well-behaved, and in the good company of friends."

With a bit of sadness, she admits that he prefers to hang out with friends rather than with Mom, and urges her to "dollies" if only it were that easy.

Designer style tips

Michele's advice is to be aware of your body type, so you can match the right silhouettes with your frame. She also encourages you to find the colors that flatter your skin tone. She emphasizes that just because you are not a size '6' or '8' doesn't mean you can't wear what is fashionable.

Update your clothes with the latest trends, she says, but not necessarily actively yourself head-to-toe with the latest in fashion. You should have fun establishing your own style, experiment subtly, discover how lovely and dress gracefully.

Lastly, be an investment dresser, not necessarily a name-brand follower.

Michele Sison will hold her first ever solo at Embellishment this October.

Skimpy chic

Tube top and printed shorts (Sison's own)

Satin

Adds! Kimono-top satin dress

Native

WOVEN SILK

Halter-tunic chiffon blouse (Sison's own)

Layered

SINEQUANONE layered dress

ENTERTAINMENT

Editor Emerson G. Yolando

Mobile/Text (for INQUIRER ENTERTAINMENT) send to 2320 for Globe (for INQUIRER ENTERTAINMENT) send to 1320 for Smart | E-mail: entertainment@inquirer.com.ph Website: www.inquirer.net/entertainment

Will he, will he rock you?

NEW YORK—ADAM LAMBERT ISN'T ruling out a take on new frontman for Queen. The legendary band has expressed interest in the "American Idol" runner-up and Lambert is a big fan of the group (see framed by the late Freddie Mercury... WILL H2

Brillante Mendoza's life after Cannes hectic

Take 5 / Page H4

CELEBRITY "HAIR-FREE" SECRETS

They've got smooth, white underarms and stubble-free legs...Is it make-up, Photoshop or something else? These ladies agree that it's all thanks to Facial Care's LASERLIGHT hair removal!

SMOOTH, HAIR-FREE LEGS

"I used to be so conscious of unsightly hair and bobon dito. I didn't have time to shave daily or wax kasi lagi akong busy sa taping. And I think I would have to repeat the regimen before hair removal. After LaserLight, I never have that problem anymore! LaserLight permanently removed my unwanted hair, and my skin is now also much softer and smoother. Now, I can wear sexy outfits for my shows – anytime – with confidence!"

- Marian Rivera, Actress

HAIR-FREE BIKINI LINES

"As a model, I always have to be prepared to wear swimsuits if shoot calls for it. But I'm not really into waxing because it hurts! And it's a tedious process you have to keep doing. It's a good thing I tried LaserLight hair removal for my bikini lines. With LaserLight, the treatment is not that painful plus the results are permanent. I don't have to worry about removing my unwanted hair anymore."

- Amanda Griffin-Jacobs, model

STUBBLE-FREE UNDERARMS

"I used to shave my underarms, but I really regret it because pangit yung regrowth. The hair becomes coarse so I'd get conscious about it. I get chicken skin, scars and rashes so I couldn't wear sleeveless. Thank goodness for LaserLight, wala na akong problema. And this smoother and whiter pa ang underarms ko! I'm not only happier and more confident, I have more time to concentrate on work and other things. No more hassle!"

- Angel Locsin, Actress

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THE WINNERS director (center), while filming "Kinatay"

A hectic life . . .

From page H4

to do it from us "Kinatay." I seriously won't know it up to 30 years in the Philippines. I don't think I can show it in commercial theaters because of the Censors.

I'd like to show it in schools and universities. Maybe UP (University of the Philippines) and CCP (Cultural Center of the Philippines) and other censorship-free zones where I can get to speak and interact with the audience.

What do you get from interacting with students?

I thought they'd get bored with my films, but they understood. It's good to introduce the youth to movies like mine. Hopefully, they can debunk some misconceptions—that indies are dark and unpolished, the sound is bad, the camera work is shaky.

Students likewise have fresh insights that I didn't anticipate.

Is that why the international title is "The Execution of I"?

It's a way. Deping (the lead character played by Coco Martin) died. He has his successor, his ideallers. The future—in one night.

Some critics found your film violent.

I saw Quentin Tarantino's entry ("Inglourious Basterds") and . . . it makes "Kinatay" look like a children's film. Hahaha! Maybe they're scared that way because they became reluctant voiceovers in a movie. A foreigner told me that the critics got too hysterical, and could no longer separate their personal values from the film.

Jerome Ureneda, editor of Urenda newspaper) Metro, told me he brought a friend to watch "Serbis" last year. He said he liked it, but his friend didn't. He brought another friend this year. Again he liked "Kinatay"; his friend hated it.

He may run out of friends . . . but that's the point, right?

That's what he told me. That my films provoke discussions and debates.

"Kinatay" is a tough film. It's not mainstream. It's only natural for people to have strong reactions and want to hear . . . its Cannes, people find passionately about cinema.

Speaking of which, what is your stand on censorship?

I'm all for a rating system. Only the director has the right to cut his film. Not even the producer can suggest cuts, which is happening in our country now. That's why I'll online work independently and produce my own films.

I don't mind if my films are rated X, but I still want them to be shown publicly. I don't intend to show my films in SM, moviewise in Robinsons. I'm afraid my audience is not in the malls.

What's your next movie?

My producer Didier Comi asked me that, too. I'd like to do a movie on the sewing—sort of a sequel to "Kinatay." It's about a person who's suspected of being a vampire . . . but it's not the usual horror flick. I also want to do a movie about old people, with Mona Lisa and Andrea Brooks in lead actors.

Will be rock you?

From page H1

Moscow).

But the 23-year-old California native said in an interview Tuesday that he'll be torn if the position is opposed soon.

"Honestly, how do you say no?" said Lambert, sporting his trademark dark nail polish and blue-streaked hair. "That's unbelievable. At the same time, I also have my own record to do, so if I could, I'd try to do both . . . we'll see."

Lambert, a former theater actor, has ambitious plans for his post-"Idol" debut album. "It will be kind of a rock-pop, electronic-dance thing," he said. "I think it's gonna take on a life of its own, so let us grow guys."

The album is in the very early stages and Lambert plans to co-write much of the material.

Any fresh collaborations?

"Madonna would be amazing," he gushes. "I think she's a genius. Lady GaGa is brilliant. She's got her finger on the pulse. Daniel Kitty Perry's amazing, absolutely amazing."

AP

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TERMINATOR SALVATION – PG13
12:00, 2:30, 5:00, 7:30, 10:00

TERMINATOR SALVATION – PG13
1:30, 4:00, 6:30, 9:00

NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM: BATTLE OF THE SMITHSONIAN – D
2:00, 4:30, 7:00, 9:30

TERMINATOR SALVATION – PG13
12:30, 3:00, 5:30, 8:00, 10:30

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Around Araneta Center

A hectic life after Cannes

By Rayan Lee Dayo Jr.

FILIPINO FILMMAKER Brillante "Dante" Mendoza didn't have time to catch his breath.

Tuesday afternoon, arriving from Cannes, France, where he won Best Director for his latest film, "Kinatay," Mendoza gave interviews to a few reporters who waited for him at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport.

The Mandaluyong City government sent a welcoming band. "It was the first time I was ever welcomed by a band," he said, amused, in an exclusive interview held in his Mandaluyong home-sweet-home later.

The next day, he had back-to-back TV interviews on GMA-7 and ABC.

In short, he's been all over the place, just like the main character in "Kinatay," whose body was hacked into bits and scattered. Everyone wants a piece of Mendoza.

"It's crazy," he said. After 22 hours days in Cannes, it is now apparent to him that there's more excitement up ahead.

TAKE FIVE

I'd like my films to be seen; I'm just afraid that my audience is not in malls'

Apart from your triumph, how was this year's fest different from last year's?

Last year, I was nervous and frustrated because I left my film entry ("Serbis") rejected. This year, I was more confident with "Kinatay." I was able to focus on the technical aspects—down to sound mixing in Guidilines, which was done in Paris.

Did you meet James Robin Tsright-Dreas?

Sir, at the party after the awards ceremony.

Did you tell her that you met her husband Sean Penn (last year's jury president, who liked "Serbis")?

I told her who I met. She's quite excited, I'm sure. Unlike Isabelle Huppert (this year's jury president, Huppert told me that she'd been to the Philippines and spent 10 days in Boracay. She visited the Banaue Rice Terraces ... with a military escort. She seems adventurous.

What was the feedback from the jurors?

I didn't think I'd make it since most of the jurors were women. My film is about the rape and murder of a prostitute by crooked cops. It's an intense mood of the female jurors, I think.

Actress-turned-lawyer Esperanza Katigbak said, "I can say I love your film because it's not female-first. I get offended by it."

What happened? Indictings of the awards committee?

All the winners danced backstage ... (where we had wine and congratulated each other. There are even back-stage for the Best Actor. After that we had a photo-call and press conference.

I had a small celebration with my wife and our French and international publicists. There we went to the official Cannes party. I dropped by the biggest beach party, but didn't stay long. I was flying back to Manila the following day.

Do you plan to join Cannes 2010?

I'd like to see but I really don't know. I never planned to have stories in the Main Competition. But for two movies in a row, Night time, all I want

A HECTIC, H4

BRILLANTE Mendoza, right, with Armenian director Tony Gatlif.

It's sad that Dante Mendoza arrived home without fanfare

LOS ANGELES—(TO STILL STUNNED director **Brillante "Dante" Mendoza** shocked the film world when he won the Best Director prize last Sunday at the Cannes Film Festival.

I keep looking at the online list of directors after Jayar passionately received the award. Wikipedia has an image of the national flag of each winner's country and his name alongside it. Dante's name is already on the list, along with an image of the Philippine colors.

Dante has joined the list of winners that includes **Francois Truffaut**, who won for "The 400 Blows," one of the all-time best films; **Francesco Rosi** (Three Brothers"); **Werner Herzog** ("Fitzcarraldo") and **Julian Schnabel** ("The Diving Bell and the Butterfly").

Winners' list

The other winner in the list are equally talked-boggling: **Ingmar Bergman**, **Luis Bunuel**, **Robert Bresson**, **Costa-Gavras**, **Sergio Leone**, **Bertrand Tavernier**, **Martin Scorsese**, **Wim Wenders**, **Joel Coen**, **Robert Altman**, **Mike Leigh**, **Wong Kar-Wai**, **Pedro Almodovar**, **David Lynch**, **Gus Van Sant** and **Michael Haneke**, among others.

The roster of directors that Jayar was up against in Cannes was equally formidable. Among them were **Jane Campion**, whose "Bright Star" came inspired many critics to swoon; **Michael Haneke**, a previous Best Director awardee, whose "The White Ribbon" won the Palme d'Or; **Quentin Tarantino**; **Alain Resnais**, the revered master who is one of the key figures of the French New Wave movement and was given the Lifetime Achievement Award during Sunday's awards ceremonies; **Kon Luchi**; **Pedro Almodovar**; **Ang Lee**; **Ribeiro Br.** and **Lars Von Trier**.

Palme'or equivalent

Hyped direction for Jayar arrived in Manila on Tuesday without fanfare. Do the authorities realize what Dante had just achieved? It's like he won the equivalent of a Pulitzer Prize or a heavyweight boxing title match.

"It was extremely heroic in Cannes," Jayar texted me recently—quite an understatement. "I feel extremely privileged to win the award. And to be as competitive two years in a row is a big achievement already. But winning an award was great, especially when I was up against the giants. I feel so blessed and (overcome). This is not just about the award. But also what I want to say in the film and how the audience reacts and does something about it."

Other 'awardees'

He added, "I share my award with Coco Martin (whom I deeply respect not only as a director but also as an actor), my family, Boy-Abunda, and my daughter Angelica."

We asked **Tikoy Aguiluz**, Cinemalaya International Film Festival director, to share his Cannes 2009 experience, especially about how Quentin Tarantino himself loved "Kinatay." Below are excerpts from his e-mail:

"I had coffee with QT (Tarantino) the day after 'Kinatay's' screening. When I arrived at Carlton Cannes Hotel's coffee shop, I found QT with Almodovar. After a brief while, I noticed a particular with Almodovar but I was able to control myself. Almodovar left and QT gave me a big hug and mentioned that he was just talking to Almodovar about the Philippines and how much he loved it...

"My then wanted talking about his film, 'Inglourious Basterds' and 'Brillante's 'Kinatay.' He compared his experience of making 'Basterds' to attempting to climb Mt. Everest. He said, 'I just had to do it. I've been trying to get this script off the ground for 10 years now...'

"As for 'Kinatay,' QT admitted that he was one of those who stood up and applauded Brillante in the screening at the Palais. It received five of Palme d'Or Palmes."

E-mail the columnist at ... or respond to ... Read his blog, "The Inquirer Reporter," at ... or http://blogs.inquirer.net/reporter/rayan/

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Editor Bonnie G. Velarde

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She wrote in Living Stars news after the recent awarding ceremonies in Manila, calling "I know out there, somewhere, are passionate nature lovers just waiting to be awakened." She knows whereof she speaks. Outside of

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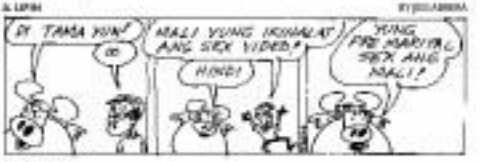

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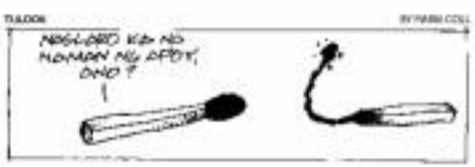


SEN

ATOMO AND WEBOY

EKO MACHINE

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DANE

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): The tension at work eases. Your boss is more relaxed, letters from relatives, e-mail reading and even the latest text messages and updates. Keep up the pace.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): You're spinning into an thoughts to your advantage and burning power. It's time to include your family. Self-control is related to your money and possessions. Be careful with your finances.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): All kinds of opposites, friends and people are attracted to you now because the Sun is in your sign. What the result of that?

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): Work slows to behind the scenes. Minutes and small tasks dominate. Now be comfortable with you and your own pace as the all-stress. Your new year is from birthday.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): Talk to others about your hopes and dreams. Don't be distant because that's how social activity can help you. Your energy will change your goals in some way.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): The Sun is at high noon in your short time, asking like a spotlight on your career. This is a time to realize you more than usual. Fortunately, this good lighting makes you look extra beautiful.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): Your relationships have a new dimension. Make plans for relaxation or hobbies with someone. Become more conscious. Become

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): Time for closer and more openness and the organization of your finances. Make changes for the better. Be more flexible with your schedule. Be open and adventure to satisfy field. Close up home-related

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): The Sun is in the sign of your career. Your attitude toward your job is important now. Be careful with your finances. You don't see them how to improve them.

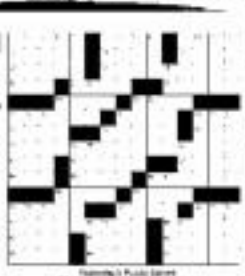
CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): The Sun has a strong effect now to get your attention. Be aware of others and of each. Because you're overstressed, get as much rest as possible. Don't overdo!

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): Your best friends are not available. This is a playful time for you. Be sure to have fun with them. Be an active participant in

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): Your family and old friends become very of pressure. Important to your family. Family discussions are profoundly

(continued)

CROSSWORD PUZZLE



Yesterday's Puzzle Solved

CONCEPTIS SU DOKU

Conceptis Sudoku By Nikoli Grimm

3			4					5
	5			8			1	
		9				3		
			1		2			6
	2						4	
5			7		3			
		2				1		
	7			2			6	
9					5			4

Difficulty Level: ★★★★

HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.
Tips and program at www.sudoku.com

Answer to previous puzzle

7	5	8	2	4	1	9	6	3
9	2	1	6	8	3	7	5	4
4	3	6	7	5	9	1	2	8
5	6	4	1	2	7	8	3	9
8	9	3	5	6	4	2	1	7
1	7	2	3	9	8	5	4	6
2	8	5	9	3	6	4	7	1
6	4	7	8	1	2	3	9	5
3	1	9	4	7	5	6	8	2

PAULEEN keeps her two precious Star Awards trophies in her bedroom.

Pauleen's...

From page 9

ntic, for his part, is proud of his extensive collection of model toy cars displayed in the TV room.

Accidental designer

Shiro Chai relates that she got into interior design by accident.

A friend asked her to do a home improvement project.

"Before she knew it, one client led to another...including late ABC head Rey. soldo Wyngco who saw my mom's work in my classmate's house," Pauleen says with pride.

E-mail: bajocsandesign@hotmail.com

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GALLERIA

1 TERMINATOR: SALVATION
2 NIGHT at the MUSEUM 2 / TERMINATOR: SALVATION
3 HOUSE / NIGHT at the MUSEUM 2
4 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM 2
5 ANGELS & DEMONS
6 TERMINATOR: SALVATION
7 MOUNTAIN SPIRIT
8 BFF: BESTFRIEND FOREVER
9 TUTOK
10 AGATON & MANDY

ERMITA

1 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM 2
2 TERMINATOR: SALVATION
3 TERMINATOR: SALVATION
4 [illegible]
5 BFF: BEST FRIEND FOREVER
6 ANGELS & DEMONS
7 TUTOK

METRO EAST

1 ANGELS & DEMONS
2 TERMINATOR: SALVATION
3 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM 2
4 TERMINATOR: SALVATION
5 HOUSE
6 TERMINATOR: SALVATION
7 BFF: BEST FRIEND FOREVER
8 MOUNTAIN SPIRIT

NOVALICHES

1 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM 2
2 TERMINATOR: SALVATION
3 ANGELS & DEMONS
4 BFF: BEST FRIEND FOREVER

PIONEER

1 TERMINATOR: SALVATION
2 ANGELS & DEMONS
3 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM 2
4 TERMINATOR: SALVATION

STA. ROSA

1 TERMINATOR: SALVATION
2 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM 2
3 ANGELS & DEMONS
4 BFF: BEST FRIENDS FOREVER

LIPA

1 TERMINATOR: SALVATION
2 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM 2
3 ANGELS & DEMONS
4 BFF: BEST FRIENDS FOREVER

DASMARINAS

1 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM 2
2 TERMINATOR: SALVATION
3 ANGELS & DEMONS
4 BFF: BEST FRIENDS FOREVER

IMUS

1 TERMINATOR: SALVATION
2 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM 2
3 ANGELS & DEMONS
4 BFF: BEST FRIENDS FOREVER

ANGELES

1 TERMINATOR: SALVATION
2 BFF: BESTFRIEND FOREVER
3 ANGELS & DEMONS
4 NIGHT at the MUSEUM 2

STARMILLS

1 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM 2
2 DEO WA IS LOLO
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1 TERMINATOR: SALVATION
2 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM 2
3 TERMINATOR: SALVATION
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6 BFF: BEST FRIENDS FOREVER

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1 TERMINATOR: SALVATION
2 BFF: BEST FRIENDS FOREVER
3 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM 2
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5 AMUSEMENT
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TUTOK

NOW SHOWING

Exclusively at MOVIEWORLD

PAULA CON took piano lessons from age 6 to 15.

ELEGANT European-inspired living room showcases mom's skills.

PART of Dad Eugene's extensive collection of model car cars.

Pauleen's paradise

For this TV-movie star, heaven is a place on earth

By Bayani San Diego Jr.
Photos by Jim Goco Punsalan

ACTRESS-TV HOST PAULEEN Luna considers her home a refuge from the hustle and bustle of show business.

"My work can be stressful," she notes. "My room is the best spot to go to when I'm dried (tired)."

She considers herself "barera."

"I'm pretty late in the morning. I'm more of a night person," she admits.

However, she has given up nocturnal ghosts with friends.

Pauleen explains, "After a while I got bored. You see the same people. You do the same things."

Now, she's a certified homebody. "When I'm not busy with work, it's either I'm at home lang or I hang out in Baby's house," she (tells) us.

Baby is Kat Buliago" ex-host Baby Rodriguez, who lives in a condo in village in Quezon City.

Digging out

Instead of line shopping, she'd rather invite friends over. "We peg mo. We order (DIDs of (Dirk Ricketts like 'The Innocent Thing' and 'Sex out the City' Clean, wholesome fun."

She spends a lot of time in her "small, simple room"—her paradise.

She plans to renovate the room this year. "I practically grew up in this house. We moved in 13 years ago, but the last time we had my room fixed was when I was 13."

That was seven years ago.

Fortunately, mom Glori is an interior designer by profession.

"I'll ask my mom to create a mini-mall and another look for me," she says. "Something clean and refreshing."

That's how the exclusive her dream house, too.

It will be the opposite of the family home, which was also designed by mom.

"The house sports a European look, very elegant. I want my dream home to have all-white walls with brown furniture."

One thing she'd retain from the old house are its curbs, huge ones.

CERAMIC figures with Swarovski crystals are moved to display cabinets, also from Italy.

VINTAGE clock and candleholders on Italian console table

CERAMIC figurine of cabinet, from Italy

Home spa

Most prized for Pauleen and mom Glori is to turn the house into a massage room.

"We both love going to spas," Pauleen says.

Her mom took up Fine Arts in Ateneo College and would decorate the house every Halloween and Christmas.

"When I was young, she'd read my brothers Miguel and I to join (the) Lorenzo costume contests in the neighborhood," Pauleen recalls. "It was embarrassing. I was already 12 and she was still dressing me up."

Mom Glori recounts that her most memorable creations for Pauleen were "Jungle Girl" and "Valentine" costumes.

"As Jungle Girl, she made me carry a headless chicken with fake blood. As Valentine, I looked like Queen Amidala from 'Star Wars.' She made everything from scratch."

Pauleen says her mom loves spending up the house every so often. Bad Days

PAULEEN'S 10

CHAT and Pauleen in the kitchen. Daughter wishes mom redesign her dream house.

TRIMMED plants maintain their crisp shrub at strategic spots.

TIMMY Cruz with her trophy for "environmental heroism"

'GreenTimThumb'

From page 8

her numerous endeavors known to many (including the family-losing company and her very own parenthood), Tim. star has been a guidance since she was 7.

"GreenTimThumb" was discovered by her aunt Virgy. "I would spend weekends with with her," Timmy recalls. "One day, I gathered branches and leaves that she let me plant in walk-outs. (So the next visit, we found) that some of the saplings had flourished. Since then, I would often be in my garden at home—digging, planting, repotting! Almost anything and everything I planted took root and grew."

As a little girl, she nurtured two dreams: "To become (an) (eminent) singer and to have my own garden." We chatted her "Gusto da Mo Sambot (Like the Moon of My Dreams)" in Tagalog recently and found that she had fulfilled the latter as well as the first.

The property is 1,000 square meters of gently rolling grounds rich soil and lots of plants—from potted grass to broomstick, to pahuyuan "rescued" from a gasoline station that was building up.

Mr. and Frenchy, a shepherd that used to roam over the grounds. Typhoon "Milenyo" forced his dents on her side, and still she cherished. Now Frenchy is the companion of Timmy's green home.

The special citation is awarded by the Office of the Presidential Adviser on Climate Change to "individuals, groups or entities from ... who have contributed to the protection of the environment." The award is named after Fe Sori Iturau who died fighting illegal loggers and protecting the forests of Palawan.

Other celebrity awardees included Richard Gutierrez, Richie Tolentil, Francis Magalona and Carlo J. Caparas.

Timmy takes every opportunity to share her "green passion" via workshops, seminars and actual planting activities, and has another dream: "To make the joys and rewards of planting known to all."